

# With the Austrian army in Galicia, by Octavian C. Tăslăuanu

Tăslăuanu, Octavian C.

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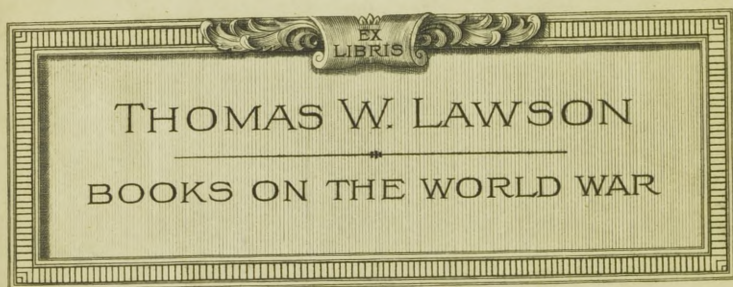
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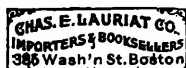




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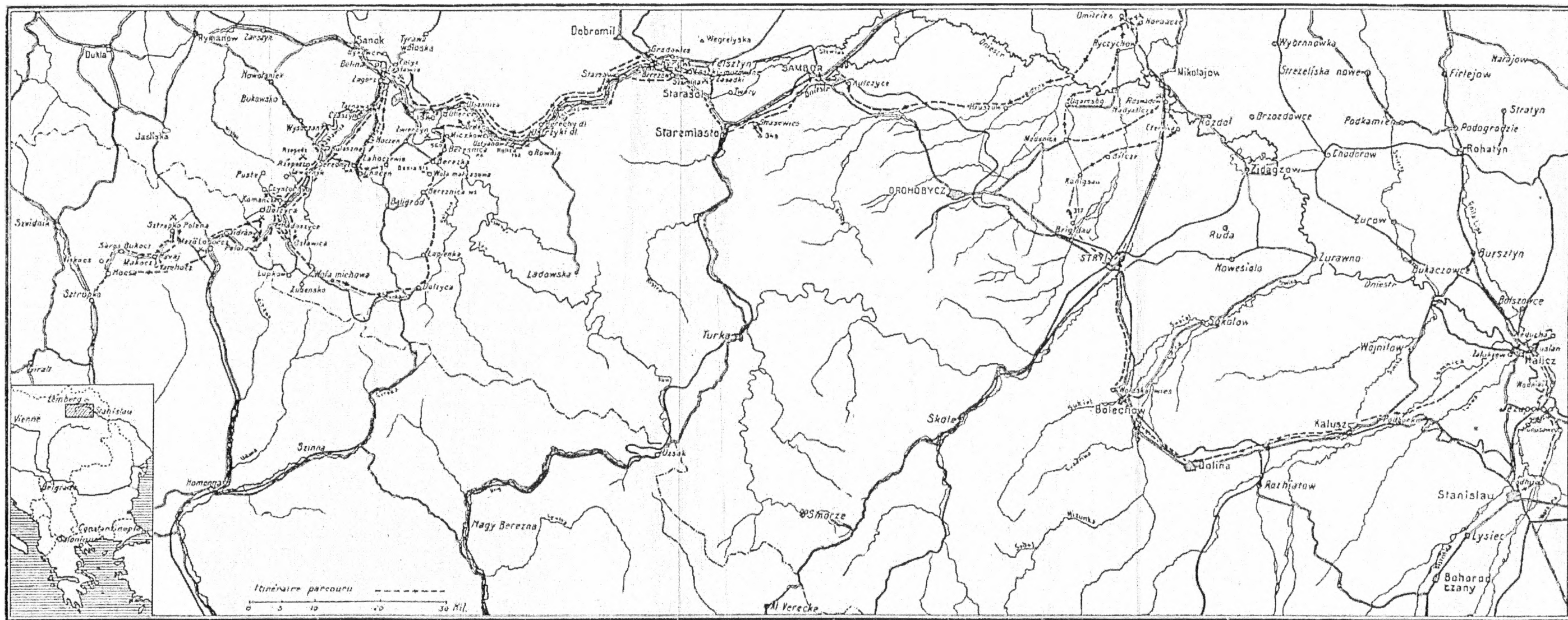


WITH THE

AUSTRIAN ARMY IN GALICIA.

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THREE MONTHS' CAMPAIGN IN GALICIA  
Original from UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN  
The map on the left indicates the geographical position of the territory covered by OCTAVIAN C. PASLAU (NU)





# *WITH THE AUSTRIAN ARMY IN GALICIA*

*By OCTAVIAN C. TĂSLĂUANU.*

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## MOBILISATION

*August 1st-25th.*

YOUNG Gavro Princip's bullet (Serajevo, June 28th, 1914) slew not only the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, but the sole hope of the various peoples of the Dual Empire for a better future. The death of that sphinx of our destinies produced a feeling of hopeless anguish in the hearts of all well-wishers of the House of Hapsburg. What they mourned was a fatality, the destruction of an illusion, and their sorrow was for the most part perfectly sincere if only because it was selfish. It was not so much the loss to the Monarchy for which they grieved as for the happier days, the hopes of justice, that the coming reign promised them.

All those who mourned also felt instinctively that the catastrophe could only be followed by others, that the Empire was shaken to its foundations, and that a storm was about to break in which the plumage of the twin-headed eagle was bound to suffer.

A thirst for vengeance sharpened national hatreds. All kinds of rumours flourished. Everyone ran round questioning, commenting, spreading the news. Every man spied on his neighbour, no matter how placid and peace-loving. We Roumanians of Ardéal could hardly move for gendarmes and police spies.

This poisoned atmosphere oppressed us for a whole month ; in fact, up to the day on which we read the Austro-Hungarian Note to Serbia. After that Note only a simpleton could believe in the preservation of peace. The rash act of a fanatical youth was to involve the chastisement of a whole nation. Austrian diplomacy took on a difficult task, for it had resolved to preserve the integrity of its southern frontiers and its hold over the recently annexed provinces by depriving Serbia of her status as an independent Power.

The storm burst. The hour for a final settlement of accounts was at hand and the whole world, holding its breath, waited for the Serbian reply. . . .

Then came the mobilisation, at first partial, then general, of the Austro-Hungarian Army. The aged Emperor made his "Appeal to his People"—*this time* addressing each race in its own tongue—to defend his realms against the Slav deluge. Even the mobilisation notices were published in all languages. Although Hungarian subjects, we *suddenly* found ourselves released from the obligation of knowing the official tongue of the Magyar Kingdom. We were even authorised to display our *own* national emblems and red, yellow and blue flags. Our political and ecclesiastical leaders adjured the Roumanian people to do its duty.

Yet no one pretended to have any confidence in the Roumanians. The General Staff at Vienna were afraid

that the Wallachians would not join the colours, and that they would thus lose their best army corps, the Transylvanian mountaineers. Budapest openly conjured up the spectre of a revolution in Ardéal. Count Tisza took the precaution of warning our political chiefs that Ardéal would be turned into a sea of blood if there was any resistance, while police spies from Budapest swarmed into Sibiiu\* and its district, and there was frantic searching for conspirators and agitators—though none were found.

My people replied to the brutalities and threats of the Hungarian Government by even anticipating the summons, and the numbers presenting themselves at the depots exceeded the estimate. In the first days of August the commander of the Twelfth Corps (Sibiiu) was able to report to Vienna that the Wallachs had proved loyal and trustworthy, and this, indeed, was no more than the truth, in spite of the long era of persecution which they had suffered at the hands of the Hungarian Government, which deemed it a proper reward for their heroism in 1848. May I say that in the last few years the Hungarian authorities have closed more than four hundred of our schools? Their Parliament has been closed to our deputies by the simple expedient of shooting our electors, and quite recently they have created against us a Hungarian bishopric of Hajdudorogh in the heart of a Roumanian district. They have also, to our detriment, introduced a system of electoral

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\*Hermannstadt.

divisions on the basis of so-called universal suffrage which effectually excludes us all.

Notwithstanding all this, we Roumanians did our duty. Count Tisza himself publicly announced his conversion, and had the courage to confess that he had been misled and that we were showing ourselves good patriots. He little guessed—worse for him—the inward fires that were raging in the hearts of those who were thus endorsing the Imperial decree.

You must realise that for my people there had come the parting of the ways. Would we be backed by Roumania? Was she ready in any case? Would she be able to emerge triumphantly from the time of storm and stress ahead of her?

I knew that the realisation of our national hopes must be at hand, and coming events raised unexpected possibilities, but the longed-for consummation of our destiny obviously depended on the strength and wisdom *we* should display.

I foresaw, too, that we might be anticipated and exposed to the greatest perils. All kinds of plans rushed through my head, and at one time I entertained the idea of an immense organisation, a carefully-timed and violent movement which, at a sign, would convert our whole nation into an army of revolt. I would have wished our people to rise, making such preparation as time permitted, and



achieve at one stroke what had baulked our efforts through all the long years. . . .

During my last few days at Sibiiu you can imagine my emotion at hearing the usual hubbub of the streets, the patriotic songs in the cafés, and the rumours which made the round of the town. Country letters were going astray, and I could discover no means of getting across the Carpathians. Detectives followed us about like shadows.

I was an officer of the Reserve and the Decree of Mobilisation compelled me to come to a decision. After much inward struggle I started out, still reluctant, for my depot at Făgăraş, which I reached on Saturday, the 1st August, in *time*, and not, like so many "patriots," during the days of grace. . . .

There was a huge crowd at the station and little could be heard but shouting, sighs and weeping. The parting of a peasant from his wife brought the tears to my own eyes. On all God's earth, is there anything harder than the separation, perhaps for ever, of two beings who love each other? The woman wept unrestrainedly, and her sobs shook her bosom. The man, heavy and stolid, gazed longingly at her and kept jumping madly out of the train, throwing his arms round her neck while they wept in concert, like children.

When the moment of final parting came his companions in misery had to hold him by force in the carriage, as he tried to jump out to his wife, who was down on her knees,

crying aloud and throwing herself forward flat, just like a mourner. The train groaned itself out, uttering a prodigious sigh. Cries, roars, the sound of innumerable voices, human and mechanical, filled the heavens. The engine gave one last despairing whistle and led us—

Under the Emperor's standards,  
There to lay down our lives.

as a neighbour of mine gaily chanted. Then followed a silence, sudden as tense. Everyone wrapped himself in his own thoughts and reflected on the last sad scene of parting.

Our Sibiu disappeared in the glow of sunset, crowned with a halo of fiery rays. Its spires piercing the sky seemed to me like enormous arms imploring Heaven for us unhappy victims. . . . The ignominy of going out to fight, and perhaps die, God knows where, as a Hungarian soldier made me tremble with indignation. I saw myself dead, with the Hungarian colours on my breast, and I heard myself carried to the grave to the sound of the Szoszad instead of our "Rest in Peace." . . . What a horrible farce!

Each wayside station resounded with the weeping and wailing of women. I gave up leaning out of the window, as the spectacle of so much misery was too much for me. And yet, after a time, this universal sorrow restored a sense of calm. War is like a cataclysm. It makes no selection of its victims. Why should I not bear the blows

of fate as well as any other man? . . . Besides, our numbers grew at every halt.

However, it was not for nothing that I found myself among all these Roumanians. I still entertained a hope.

There was not the slightest sign of enthusiasm anywhere. We might have been a company of the dead until we reached Făgăras. Like slaves we responded to the summons of our master, even a summons to our death. But at the bottom of our hearts there lurked the hope of a terrible vengeance. God Himself will weep for the master when the arms of the slave are free—and he strikes! . . . The weak have only hope to live on.

We were late in reaching Făgăras and night had fallen. I don't know why trains always seem to arrive at Făgăras by night. I had been there twice before in connection with lawsuits. Onions and lawsuits are the speciality of the place. But the lawsuit days were over now.

They woke me very early at the hotel. Someone in a room near by was bawling like a bull: "Megallj, megallj, Kutya Szerbia". . . ("Wait a bit, wait a bit, Serbian Dog"), an offspring of mobilisation. I went out with my toilet incomplete. It was the first time I heard the baying of the hounds of war.

Outside, the crowd was in gala dress. The peasantry from the neighbouring villages were all making for the citadel. I followed in their wake. We were at once sent

back until the next day. The day turned out to be next but one. . . . We had come too soon and there was much amazement at our zeal.

I turned up at the barracks every day. There was a little office in which each man's papers were scrutinised and the weaklings examined by three doctors. It was a mechanical process, like passing through a mill. No attempt at military discipline. At length the turn of the officers came round. A second-lieutenant plied us with questions about our health and discovered that nearly every man had a weak point somewhere.

At length the day came for the battalion to be organised. The barrack square was filled with peasants, and among their variegated popular costumes the Germanized kit and equipment looked like rye in a field of wheat. Everyone looked depressed. Most of the men had slept at the barracks, but a few "old hands" and those possessing passes had managed to get their food in the town. Accustomed to the peace and liberty of home life all these peasants took very unkindly to their forgotten soldiering. They had an instinctive distrust of the future and not a man among them believed he was really going to be "dressed." So when they saw real kit and equipment emerging from store there was much shaking of heads and sighing, which increased when distribution began by companies. It had then ceased to be even a joke. Their dumb hostility became terror. It was easy to see from their expression and

movements that they were thinking of flight. A universal murmur was heard. Small groups of men talked together in a low voice. Some made for the canteen to drown their sorrow, while others collected in corners like herded cattle brought down from pasture.

A voice rang out, the voice of Captain Patakfalvi giving orders. There was a silence as of the grave, and then real work began. The men were sorted out into categories, according to special aptitudes, rank, and so on, and finally formed into four companies. The remainder formed a reserve company, and, as there were more than two thousand of us present, establishment was exceeded.

The duty of organising the battalion devolved on the regular officers, of which we had three. We reservists merely looked on. They were in difficulties from start to finish. Two of them, Hungarians, knew no Roumanian. The third, who looked to me like a Roumanian, hardly opened his mouth. Captain Patakfalvi spoke Hungarian, and when he tried to give orders in Roumanian, failed to make himself understood. He became irritable, and finally lost his temper and treated the poor wretches to blows, kicks and Hungarian curses : " dizno olah, budos olah "— (" Wallachian swine, Wallachian dung "), the usual Magyar amenities towards us. We found a certain number of Roumanians among the officers. I confess it made the blood mount to our heads to see middle-aged men, good citizens who had come to fulfil their duty to the country,

so abominably treated. A Hungarian comrade with whom we shared our indignation sympathised, but could only shrug his shoulders, and we had to put up with it. I strolled into the yard near by. Two peasants from Bran were talking together in undertones and I overheard something of what they said:

“They will really learn something about the Wallachians when God sends the day.” . . .

“Dirty dogs! They can’t stop insulting us, even at a time like this.” . . .

“God help them!” . . .

I did not catch any more, but I saw one of them turn his face toward the Carpathians and piously make the sign of the cross.

I went back to our “organisers” and made up my mind to give them such help as I could. I transmitted their orders, and the men understood me, realising that I was a Roumanian like themselves. In a short time everything went like clockwork. The Hungarian officers calmed down and even tried to repeat Roumanian words after me, with an occasional sprinkling of ploughman’s oaths shot between their teeth. The proceedings came to an end at last. Each company was 267 strong, while the reserve company mustered 800.

From that day indignation and despair made me a revolutionary.

Revolutionary! An impressive word, a terrible word. Fortunately, it is less dangerous as uttered in Ardéal than elsewhere. Among us, great ideas are speedily drowned in wine, and rarely survive the season of song. After a day or so, revolutionaries become indolent and wary.

This time, indeed, the dance of death was unmistakably about to begin, and we had to take our part in our turn. We were still too young not to be ready to sacrifice ourselves to our ideal, and this ideal summoned us to action.

During the following days I distributed equipment to the troops, beginning with the greatcoat, which was displayed before each man as he came up. I called them up in groups of ten to twenty men at a time. They looked at their kit somewhat askance, sighed, and threw it over their shoulders to carry it off. The stores had duly disgorged everything required by the regulations, down to the last button, except arms. I realised that the military authorities had made every possible preparation for this war. On the fourth day of mobilisation the Territorials were all in uniform. The field kitchens had just arrived, fresh from the painter, along with the munition and baggage wagons. We had everything except our horses, and I must confess that I was greatly struck by this triumph of organisation.



On the evening of that day I went into the quarters of the 11th Company, to which I had been posted. I was immediately greeted by a "Long life to you, sir," which took me by surprise. The men were dressing. They were under the impression that I was to be their company commander, and it was plain that they were thoroughly pleased. Many of them knew my name from the "Popular Library" of the "Association for Roumanian Literature and National Culture," of which I was secretary at Sibiiu. When I told them that it was I who had sent them the pamphlets and almanack, they pressed my hand with every mark of respect. I never had a finer reward for my life-work than that. When I left them, their "Long life, sir," was warmer than ever. A Hungarian officer queried me: "What the devil are they shouting for?" I gave him no answer, and it was my turn to shrug my shoulders. I left the barracks.

My ideas began to make me warm within. I knew that I was in command of men who would listen to and follow me. I was not a raving dreamer after all! Everything hung on the bearing of our Roumanian officers, and here we were already prospective heroes. I began to turn over various plans of organising a revolt.

I experimented on some of these officers who happened to be personal friends, and was astonished to find that we understood one another at once. There was

no need to go into details. Deep within our hearts, the same thoughts, the same hopes lay hidden. Together we shared the same longing for the day of fulfilment. We certainly realised quite clearly the gravity of our words, and yet I found our paradoxical state of mind very curious. As long as we confined ourselves to generalities we were of one mind and our enthusiasm knew no limits, but as soon as we began to consider the first steps towards action, the inauguration of the great movement, we lapsed into silence and reflection. Not one of us had the courage to take the initiative and suggest an actual plan. We liked to regard ourselves as revolutionaries, but we did not deserve the name, for the temperament for deeds, not words, was not to be found among us. Centuries of slavery had sapped the vitality of our race. Generations of hewers of wood and drawers of water rose up to bid prudence and the cult of hopeful expectation. We came to the conclusion that it was better to make no preparation which might betray us. Our hopes might be smothered in our blood. We felt that we must wait for the great hour in which we should rise like the tempest and sweep everything irresistibly before us. Were we not masters, as our fathers before us, of the glorious land of Olto ?

So we refrained from troubling our pretty dream with plans and calculations. It seemed to us all the more grandiose and sublime. . . .

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How brutalising reality is ! Military life and discipline soon cured us of dreaming. Training had begun, and this soon brought back memories of our old recruit days. The whole day there was nothing but "Half-turn, right, left," "Advance in open order." The August sun, bright and warm, seemed to be making fun of us, a lot of old gentlemen playing at soldiers. But even this training had its attractions. On fine days we spent all our time in the open air. The clear atmosphere and the exercise brought back our youthful vigour. We were soon drilled to automata and soldiers for good and all. Besides, we were not altogether without our amusements. There was a certain number of Hungarians in the company, not many, fortunately. One of them had been a Customs official, and boasted of having arrested several spies near Zarnesti, where he "had a shoemaker's shop." In addition to which he was given to poetry, a kind of Hans Sachs. Squat, hump-backed and pigeon-chested, he was never tired of the sound of his own voice. One day we got him on to reading us some of his own effusions. He struck a martial attitude and read us a patriotic song, the original of which I have kept. Of course, he could not admit that there was such a thing as an army composed of Wallachians. His verses were concerned with the purely Magyar host of which he rhapsodised. After we left for the front, we lost sight of him and have never heard what became

of him, and my only reason for referring to the existence of this Hegyi Kalman is that he was typical of those Hungarians, skilled in boasting and patriotic declamation, who yet vanished like a flock of birds at the first sign of danger.

Our peasantry had some difficulty in grasping the Honved\* words of command, for most of them had been taught the German equivalent.

But, in their stolid way, they suffered the blows of fate with composure. The Olteni and Braneni (peasants from the district of Bran and the river Aluta), who formed the bulk of my battalion, were a quick-witted and intel-

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(\*) "Honved" means literally "defender of the soil," "territorial." The Honved is the Hungarian national army, and corresponds to the Austrian "Landwehr." The Honved regiments have their own cadres and form a definite part of the active army. All Hungarian Territorials, whether they have served in the common army or only in the Honved regulars, are embodied in the "Honved" reserves from their thirty-second to their forty-second year. These regiments are only formed in case of general mobilisation. They are not supposed to be sent to the firing-line, and before 1908 they could not even be employed in the defence of Austrian territory.

My regiment, the 23rd Territorial, had its first battalion at Sibiiu, the second at Deva, and the third at Făgăras. Its Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Draskoczi, and his adjutant, Lieutenant Vida, were both Hungarians and regulars. The Commanding Officer of the first battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Voicu, was a Roumanian, and a regular in the 51st Infantry. His colleague of the second battalion, Captain Abraham, came from the same regular regiment, if I remember rightly. The Commanding Officer of the third, my battalion, Major Hettinger, came from the 31st Infantry Regiment of Sibiiu. All our officers, even the administrative and transport officers, came from the regular or territorial reserve, and were therefore over the age of 32.

ligent lot, so, after all kinds of attempts at escape had been made and it became abundantly clear that very few could succeed, they settled down at last and put their faith in God.

One day on which we were doing a practice attack, I came up with two men on patrol. We got into conversation. They knew who I was, and familiarity soon made them bold. "What about Roumania?" said one. "Why on earth doesn't she come in? . . ." I tried to hedge, and explained that Roumania was in a very difficult position. She was only a small country, could not decide which side to take, and so on. They listened to me in silence, but after a minute one of them gave me my answer, sharp and clear: "That's all very true, sir, but, after all, if we *have* to fight and shed our blood, we might as well know why?" I gave them such consolation as I could, and assured them that Territorials would never be sent to the firing-line. They would have believed me if they could, but their sound common-sense told them that they were not undergoing all this training for amusement.

. . . . .

I was posted to the 4th platoon of the 11th Company. There was not a single Roumanian among the company commanders, who were all foreigners. Jews from Budapest, though one boasted a Swabian origin and landed property in the county of Hunédoara. Most of them

knew not a word of Roumanian and our boys from Fàgàras were all at sea with their Hungarian. One day an officer thought he could stimulate the martial ardour of his men with a speech, which he concluded with these words : “ The sky above our Fatherland is black with the clouds of a great danger.” He added “ Have you understood ? ” The men shook their heads. He tried again : “ Who *did* understand ? ” A corporal stepped out, “ Good ! Tell them what I said.” The corporal translated : “ Listen ! Our commander said that we must all get our cloaks as there’s going to be rain.”

It was a long time before we stopped laughing !

We had all done our military service, either in the common Army or the Honveds, so that our orders were already a strange compound of the two tongues, German and Hungarian. The result of this clever system was indeed a babel of sound. The foreign officers required the services of an interpreter every time they addressed the men, and the more apoplectic of them soon lost all patience and began to swear and knock the men about. The situation was, in fact, utterly intolerable until the Roumanian officers intervened.

My company commander was a good fellow of the simple-minded sort, but he was easily swayed by the Jingo press, and I really think he took advantage of my presence to pour forth his “ Wallachian swine and dung,” until one day I drew his attention to the fact

that this style of address was not to be found in the regulations. His special *bête noire* was Roumanian professors, whom he professed to regard as agitators and feared intensely. More than once he was reprimanded by his superiors for ill-treating the men.

Boldogh Lajos—for that was his name in its Hungarian form—was also something of a poet in his spare time, making the second to honour our company. He soon found out that I was an author, and we soon struck up a friendship. He used to read his poetry to me, and I, of course, praised it. The stuff was not exactly bad. In conversation we always avoided politics. The good side of this literary association was that it eventually carried me to the command of the 1st platoon.

I may note in passing that the whole company habitually took my orders for preference.

Our Commanding Officer, Major Hettinger of the 31st Infantry, was a man of pleasant manners and cultivated tastes. His only defect was that he knew no language but German, though he allowed us to transmit his orders in our own tongue. The Hungarians, violating the letter and spirit of the regulations, tried to insist on the exclusive use of their own, but the Saxons and we Roumanians would have none of it, so that training became a confusion of tongues which was a subject of endless mirth.

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After a short time we got on to the musketry course, and our elderly members shot so well that the Major, who had previously held a poor opinion of Territorials, was greatly impressed. I discovered personally that even after seventeen years I was still the good shot of my youth, and I confess that this apparently trivial fact brought me back to my dreams and their hoped-for fulfilment. I took careful note of all the best shots and arranged to get the pick of the men into my platoon.

We also did a field musketry course with dummies and proved a great success. As it was raining when we set out, a woman in a cart offered two of us a lift. She soon gave vent to lamentation and said to me: "Oh, sir! If all the tears that have flown during this mobilisation were collected together they would make a river as big as the Aluta. You have no idea how much sorrow there is in the world just now."

"Cheer up! God has us all in His keeping. Your husband will come back all right."

An old fellow who was driving, hereupon took his pipe out of his mouth and turned a dark, anxious face towards us.

"I have given the Emperor three sons," he said, "and all I can say is that I shall be a happy man if I get one of them back home."

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We Territorials took the oath of allegiance on the Emperor's birthday. A Catholic priest presided over the ceremony by himself. The Hungarians came up first, then the Saxons, who did not number more than a hundred, and lastly the Roumanians, who repeated after me the formula which I translated from the Hungarian.

"In presence of All-Mighty God, we swear our solemn oath that we will be faithful and obedient to His Majesty, our Lord and Master, Francis Joseph I., by the Grace of God Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc., etc., Apostolic King of Hungary—and to all the laws and ordinances.

"We swear to obey His Majesty, His Majesty's generals, our leaders and superiors, to honour and defend them, to carry out their orders of all kinds against all enemies, whoever they be, by land or sea, by day or night, in battle, in attack, in encounter and all other circumstances—in a word, everywhere and at all times we will fight bravely and loyally. We will never abandon our comrades, our standard, or our guns. We will never parley with the enemy and we will also act in conformity with the laws of war as valiant combatants. We will live and die honourably. With the help of God, so be it!"

Consider the idea of fidelity to the master who had abandoned us times without number!—and submission to the laws and ordinances which he violated repeatedly to our prejudice! How could such an oath be held to

bind us ? I frankly regarded the whole thing as a farce, and if it was not taking the name of God in vain I do not know what is.

All this time, of course, our hopes were fixed on Roumania. We were hourly expecting the signal, as a blind man longs for a ray of light. Then came the news that the Crown Council had issued a decree of neutrality, and henceforth we were as sheep without a shepherd. . . . All our plans crumbled away, our spirits sank and we had no heart left. We resigned ourselves to the imminent prospect of being led to the slaughter.

Yet the Carpathians were temptingly near, and it would probably not have been excessively difficult to escape across the frontier. For a moment we toyed with the idea of making for Roumania—the whole battalion. But when it came to the moment of decision not a man could bring himself to abandon Ardéal. Our peasants were not the sort of men to leave their homes with their precious quota of wives, children and relations, thousands and thousands of good Roumanians, to the merciless vengeance of the oppressor merely to save their own skins. . . .

We only had one happy day—a day full of emotion but all too brief—that on which young Prince Carol passed through on his way back to Sinaia. We all felt inclined to hold up his car, compel him to put himself at the head of the Roumanian troops of Transylvania,

and say to him, what they used to say in the old story :

My Lord, be our Emperor,  
The source of all our happiness.

But this was only a dream like the rest, the fleeting  
vision of a moment. . . .

. . . . .

We were now ready to start, and as time hung heavy on our hands we went in for recreations of a fifteenth-century type. The Hungarian officers in particular—I avoided them as much as possible—spent the evenings bawling Kossuth's song of liberation, and by midnight the place echoed with patriotic cheers and applause, not unmingled with hiccoughs. Our Major, though a real soldier in every sense, was also something of a devotee of Bacchus, and I will own that his frank, clever face, his fine manners and cheery good humour made him an object of well-merited admiration to us reservists. He was popular with the men, irrespective of nationality. One evening when I happened to meet him in the streets our conversation turned to the subject of politics. He was quite certain that Roumania's sympathies must be entirely with Austria, and when I explained that we Roumanians could not possibly have any love for Hungary, whose one ambition was to magyarize us, and that our sole interest in the war was the hope that it would lead to a federal monarchy, this magnanimous gentleman immediately granted us full and free autonomy. But

it was to be confined to the Roumanians, for whom he made no attempt to conceal his liking, and not extended to the Slavs. "These Slavs are the curse of the Monarchy," he said contemptuously. "It would be a jolly good thing if they were all swallowed up." I gave him a lengthy disquisition on the theories of Karl Renner, Otto Bauer and Jaszki Olzkar, and tried to show that our dualism was an impossible form of State, and our constitutionalism a sham which had divided the peoples of the Monarchy and weakened our position in world politics. A federal State, in which all the constituent peoples should have complete national liberty and with a central Parliament at Vienna, was the sole hope for the Hapsburg Empire. If the Slavs were to become loyal members they must not be left outside this scheme.

"If it were not for the danger of Irredentism, no one could possibly object," he remarked musing.

I was convinced personally that Federalism could only delay and would even contribute to the dissolution of the Empire, so I did not follow up this point, but I replied with some warmth: "At any rate the present position is quite impossible and there must be a change. Don't you see that our army, so well organised and prepared, is an army without a soul. Its members are all pulling different ways. I'm curious to see what it can accomplish in these circumstances." The last sentence slipped out unawares; I had forgotten for the moment to whom I

was speaking. The Major stopped me, looked at me closely and inquisitively: "We shall win all right, you may be *quite* certain of that!" and off he went. I could not help thinking he must have heard William saying: "We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world."

The Austrian and Hungarian press vied with one another in their praises of the allied Armies of the Central Powers. The two publics believed in their press and rejoiced immoderately. But here and there we came across country journals in which quite different news and comments were to be found. No Roumanian believed in our victory, or even wished it, and we all had the conviction that a Russian defeat would thrust us into bondage for ages on ages. "If Russia lost," a peasant once said to me, "Tisza would throw away all restraint and strangle us." Another peasant, bidding good-bye to his son who was leaving for the front with a battalion of Honveds, delivered himself of the following remark: "Come back safely, dear boy, but God grant you may be beaten."

## WE START OUT

*August 26th—28th.*

WE knew that there had been a change in the regulations governing the employment of Honveds and Territorials in time of war. For one thing, it was common knowledge that we could be taken beyond the frontiers of Hungary, but we were quite sure that middle-aged men like ourselves would never be used as combatants, even on the battlefield. Little by little news dribbled through to the officers that our army was on the Russian frontier, and had even at certain points penetrated into the immense Empire of Nicholas II. After all, the promise of a journey to Russia, "at State expense," was far from uninviting, and we were all eagerness to start.

We had not long to wait. On the evening of August 23rd our Commanding Officer received telegraphic orders to start within 48 hours for Galicia via Körösmező. The news, though no surprise, depressed us considerably as the herald of the dark Unknown. Whatever could have happened in Galicia? Our impersonal and irresponsible curiosity quickly disappeared.

We had now only 48 hours, and what a lot we crowded into them! The ammunition carts were stacked high and many an axle groaned under the burden of baggage, equipment and stores. Besides, we had to polish our accoutrements, make our wills, get our confessions over, and much else. When I had distributed the regulation 120 rounds per man my plans for rebellion invaded my minds with renewed force. Why should we not all jump out of the train at the bridge over the Aluta and seize the heights of Tâlmăciu? . . . No, it was absurdly useless, in face of the helpless neutrality of Roumania. The last remnants of my dream dissolved. I felt more or less certain that the declaration of "neutrality" masked the hesitation and manifest unpreparedness of our brothers of the Kingdom. It was no good defying Fate, I thought, comforting myself with the reflection that we had already seen so much in our short lives that we could be surprised at nothing that might happen in Roumania. At bottom, too, I still cherished secret hopes. Perhaps we should be sent to the Bukowina. We should there meet our other brothers, and the sight of this reunion might bring Roumania to her senses. . . .

During this preliminary period a sign of ill-omen appeared in the sky. An eclipse of the sun occurred, on August 24th, if I remember rightly. I am not in the least superstitious, but I confess that on this occasion

I caught myself scouting the scientific explanation and subscribing to the naïve belief of the men. "A bad sign, sir! God's going to hide even the light of the sun from us; that means no good to us just as we're starting off." Many of them took off their caps, turned to the east and crossed themselves, while the real devotees knelt down facing the east and threw themselves forward at full length three times. At any rate there was no doubt that the phenomenon produced a feeling of general depression, and only a few managed to rise to a joke—and a bad one at that. . . . "It's vampires swallowing the sun. That's how the Russians will be treating us soon."

The farewell banquet to the officers was a wondrous affair. It was the first time I had seen all our battalion commanders. The ladies of Fàgàras had sent us favours in the Hungarian national colours. I stuffed mine into my pocket and threw it away as soon as I got outside. When the toasts were reached, our Major proposed the Roumanians. Among all those foreigners he was the only man to remember that he was commanding Roumanian troops.

At six o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, August 26th, we were ready to start. A priest named Borzia was in attendance, and a short service was held. The tone of his prayers was one of profound fervour, and awoke in us mysterious, saddening echoes. When we knelt down, the whole battalion gave way to tears. A



large number of women from the neighbourhood had gathered round us, and these now joined in, their quiet, refined lamentations sounding like a distant reply to our own rough chorus. The reverend Father sprinkled us all with holy water, and this acted like a purifying tonic. The memories of this little ceremony will be with me to the end of my life.

“Habt acht! Marschieren! Bataillon Marsch!” We had not taken a hundred steps before our numbers were tripled. Women and relations of all kind and degree had joined the men. Our Territorials caught up their children in their arms, and no one had either the power or the heart to separate them at such a time. So in this fashion we went to the station, the women and girls pelting us with white roses and pressing cigarettes on the men.

At each stopping station the whole village turned out to meet the train, and there were more heart-rending farewell scenes. I remember one curious incident. Boldogh, my company officer, had had Sergeant Mäsariu, of Porumbac, put under arrest for what he called “agitation.” The men were in great ill-humour because the train did not stop at every station and thus give an opportunity for a last farewell to relatives and friends. Being rather the worse for drink, they protested vigorously. The Hungarians, highly excited perhaps by the sight of their tricolour scarves, which they wore like a bandolier,

immediately saw the Fatherland in danger. There was a dreadful scene. A signal to the men might have resulted in the revolt of our dreams, and I remember thinking it would be an easy matter to raise the crowd. However, on our intervention, the sergeant was released, and his company received him back with loud cheers. I said to the hot-headed Boldogh: "You really *are* a fool to provoke these Wallachian savages. You know there might be an unholy row." He repented somewhat, so I continued: "Anyhow, they'll calm down right enough when we've got the Aluta behind us." And this prophecy turned out to be sound enough.

"You're a lucky man," Boldogh said to me some time later, "to be among your own countrymen whom you know and who know you. . . ."

"Rot! All these peasants are much alike, and there's nothing to choose between you Hungarians and us. It is you who have no knowledge of them, much less affection for them. You regard a peasant as a useful creature, whose mission in life is to help to keep you in idleness and the enjoyment of your Budapestine illusions. . . ."

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We felt certain that we should stay some time at Sibiiu and probably leave with the rest of the regiment, but we were woefully mistaken. There was barely time to get some dinner at the station and exchange a word

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or two with a few friends. What would I not have given for even a minute in my home! . . .

The journey was uninteresting until we reached Marmaros-Sziget, but we enlivened it as well as we could. At Sâtmar, the last point on Roumanian soil, which we reached on the evening of August 27th, I gave a crown to our drummer Zosim and asked him for some national airs, to which we danced blithely, "hore" and "serbes," then and there in front of the station, while the earth shook beneath our feet. Then we sang "Roumanians, Awake!"\* until the Hungarians were in a tantrum. I lost no time in mixing with the men and joining in their song and dance, and some of my Roumanian comrades soon followed me. Though this behaviour did not at all commend itself to the Hungarians, we were only too glad of an opportunity to protest, in this innocent fashion, against Magyar chauvinism, with its incessant attempts to make us "Erdelyi népfelkelő ezred," that is, a regiment of Ardeal Territorials, thus concealing our true Roumanian character. While we were singing, I saw several of our audience grind their teeth and try to stop us, but all to no purpose. The Hungarian women, I noticed, were markedly less hostile, and even complimented us Roumanians on our good looks. One of them, called "Ersike," fell on my neck, gave me a smacking kiss and stuck a favour in my cap with the words: "Come

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(\*) Revolutionary song, written by the poet Muresianu in 1848.

back a hero—I am thine”! I soon had the favour out and threw it back at her, but it will take me a long time to forget her pink cheeks and fine eyes. . . .

During the next night we met the first hospital trains, and found among the wounded some men of a battalion of Honveds from Fagàras, who only left a week before us. They told us that no sooner had they left the train than they were thrown into the battle, and that the battalion had practically disappeared. But they could not say whether they had been fighting in Galicia or Russia. It did not take us officers long to deduce that it could only have been Galicia, and the thought came as an unpleasant shock. Was it not plain that we, too, would be thrown into the fight?

At Marmaros-Sziget I bade farewell to Roumanian soil. I remembered going there two years before to establish the first branch in Marmaros of our “Association for Roumanian Literature and Culture in Ardéal.” It would have been a treat to set eyes on a familiar face, but nothing could be seen but troops, troops without measure and without end. It was melancholy to leave a land inhabited by Roumanians, a land so dear to me, without a friendly handshake. I wanted someone to say good-bye to, but could only throw a kiss and fight my emotions.

It was a Saint’s Day—Santa Maria—and the sky was gloriously clear when we entered the region of the

Carpathians inhabited by the Ruthenes.\* These are a remarkably healthy looking people. The women are handsome, and their costume has a strong resemblance to that of our peasant women in the Bukowina and the mountainous districts of Mûras-Turda, Chuc and the Three Seats.

I was much interested in this race, organised and rendered articulate by the bold Pan-Slav, Bobrinsky. I got hold of an interpreter, and tried a little cross-examination, but invariably came up against a cautious : *Ne ruzumim*—"I don't understand ; I don't know." I found one, however, who could speak German, and he told me that the Russians were both strong and numerous, and had rolled up like a flood. This particular Ruthenian had once been to Kieff, when he had brought away holy images and sacred books, so he said.

Once past the Carpathians and in Galicia proper, I noted with some surprise that not even all the railway employees knew German. All the bills and notices were in the Slav, Ruthenian, or Polish tongue. The inhabitants everywhere spoke a Slav tongue. We were, in fact, plainly immersed in the Slav ocean, and I was lost in admiration of the national liberties which the inhabitants enjoyed. If only it had been the same with us in Ardéal ! . . . \*

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(\*) The author forgets to say that Galicia is under the administration of Austria, while Transylvania is governed by Hungary.

On the way there we received several warnings to be extremely careful and uncommunicative, as the population of Galicia was not friendly and spies swarmed everywhere. It was a revelation to us, who came from the most highly policed State in Europe, and we therefore supposed that Russian propaganda must have been very active and generous to have attained such success. A Roumanian from the Bukowina told us at a station that "all these wretches have sold themselves to the Russians." Speaking for myself, I was rather curious to obtain further information about this organisation, but, as it happened, it was a long time before I got to know anything more, and then only after the Russians had dealt us many a severe blow.

We reached the station of Stanislau at midnight. It was pitch dark and confusion reigned triumphant. We even had the greatest difficulty in detraining, but at length arms were piled, and we hung about waiting for orders. After a long delay the Major led the way to some fields which had been appointed as our camping-ground.

We began to swear like troopers, but ended by settling down anyhow, where we could. I got the stretcher-bearers to bring up a stretcher for my bed, for I really believe that if I had lain on the ground I should never have got up alive again. I dozed a few hours, wrapped up in my blankets and cursing heartily all the evil-doers who had caused this war.

## THE FIRST STAGES

*August 29th.*

DAYLIGHT next morning gave me a chance to take stock of my surroundings. At close quarters the fields seemed more like a fair-ground or an uncultivated estate. As a matter of fact, it was the first time I had seen a military encampment. There was a perpetual flux of incoming and outgoing troops. On the side nearest the town all the various units of the baggage train were drawn up wheel to wheel, and, hard by, our field kitchens were smoking pleasantly. The sun rose majestically behind the mountains, indifferent to our miseries.

I was feeling thoroughly ill tempered. Why on earth had we been compelled to sleep out in the open like cattle when there were palaces within a stone's-throw ? Wasn't there a single room for officers in the whole of that town ? All the officers were asking the same question, but the men, hardened to anything, were inclined to make fun of us, and asked us, with a smile, if we had enjoyed our dreams.

We washed at a fountain near by. Only women could be seen in the houses, but they showed themselves

very obliging, though we could only communicate with them by signs. I managed to obtain a basin, as I still cherished the illusion that it was impossible to wash without one. We had also not yet got used to the idea that it is quite possible to live without breakfast each morning, so we trailed off in small parties to the station buffet, dear and dirty, for some coffee. The station resounded with strange tongues, mainly Ruthenian and Polish, and there were many suspicious faces. I put down everyone who could not speak German as a spy, and felt like catching them all by the collar and beating them soundly as a sign of my displeasure at being landed in their accursed country. What on earth had I gone there for, and what did I care for Galicia, Russia and all other enemies of the Empire? Yet my hopes, ever insistent, had not yet abandoned me. Once in Bukowina, if ever we got there, I was firmly resolved to stamp on all my orders and oaths. Of what force is an oath taken under duress and against all the taker's convictions? God is not a Hungarian Minister to punish us for breaking a compact made against our will.

We were still apparently without a destination, and the Governor of Stanislau had not the remotest notion what to do with us, as we had come too soon! We were astonished to see how little notice was taken of our arrival, and though we hardly believed that the Monarchy was wanting us for the taking of Moscow we felt quite



injured that we should seem to be regarded as apparently unimportant. General discontent and a suspicion of demoralisation was the natural result.

Suddenly a Staff-Captain, imperious in his manner and bursting with importance, came on the scene. He exchanged a few curt words with our Major and immediately rode off, smacking his brand-new riding-boots with his whip, a magnificent affair with a silver handle fashioned in the shape of a horse's head. He had brought us the order to defend Stanislau ! We, the new arrivals, panting to march on Kieff, were to defend the town in which we had just detrained, a town at the foot of the Carpathians ! Territorials, to defend Stanislau ! The Major was right. We were certainly going into action.

The battalion fell in, for we had to march through the town. We put on our most impressive gait, but the half-pitying, half-contemptuous looks of the inhabitants were not lost on us. We also noticed some incredulous looks which conveyed no meaning to us, though they were the looks of those who knew how things stood in Galicia, while we were still in ignorance.

I could not tell you how we passed through the village of Podluze. We marched along in silence, each man absorbed in his thoughts. At the foot of a hill we halted while the Major explained the situation to us and gave us our orders. Our faces during this ceremony were a study in themselves. We listened as if he had been an

apostle revealing mysteries which we alone were worthy to understand. The enemy must be somewhere near Kolomea and intended to march on Stanislau. We were to occupy the crests along the river and stop him if he tried to advance. We listened intently while he added that the Russians were still some distance off, and showed us on a map the position each company was to occupy. He saluted and went off. We saluted likewise and hastened away to carry out our orders, with ceremonious gravity which was anything but native to us.

We found some of our own troops by the Jezupol road, occupying new trenches, the first we had ever seen. Fields of wheat and maize were spread out before us, and on our right was the valley of the Warona, to which we could descend by a steep hill covered with beech and hazel trees. I fixed on a position and sent out patrols to various observation posts. I could feel the military enthusiasm of my youth coming back to me with a rush.

The field kitchens only turned up late, for we were occupying a position on the crest of a steep ridge quite devoid of roads or paths. It was our first true campaigning meal in aluminium plates. The Major was the only man to seem pleased with life. He was full of jokes, and encouraged us to cultivate a liking for this kind of life seeing that we should know no other for many a long day to come. He offered us tea from his

travelling samovar, and undoubtedly did all that he could to be a satisfactory elder brother.

We learned that a priest in the village had been just arrested, condemned and hanged as a spy. It was the first positive confirmation of the hostility of the Ruthenes of Galicia towards us.

Night came down and slowly wrapped us in her mysterious shadows. When I was a child there was nothing I liked more than sleeping out on a summer night, but here I cordially detested the idea of lying out under the stars. We should all have liked to have made tracks for the nearest village to find some more human bed-chamber, but the order came to double the sentries and remain where we were.

The men came to tell me they could make a bed "as good as my bed at home," and by way of proof brought up whole armfuls of hay, which they threw down in a heap in a corner well sheltered from the wind. Packed close together for warmth we all finally fell asleep. In the sky a crescent moon like the sickle of Death shone calm and clear.

*August 30th—September 1st.*

At dawn, more dead than alive the men fell in and set off for Halicz, a long march. Our Commanding Officer's

horse threw him, "a bad sign," as the men were not slow to remark.

On the way they made presents of food to the Ruthenian children, as they had brought a plentiful supply of provisions when they left home, in addition to the two or three rolls in their haversacks. They fell out as they liked and handed out bread and coppers, fondling their horses, for their thoughts were full of the dear ones they had left behind them. The mothers were much moved. A Ruthenian in high boots and an old hussar's *képi* pulled down over his eyes was guarding some cattle a little way off. I watched him closely for some time, and the longer I watched the surer I became that he was a spy. He was altogether too cunning and observant. He tried to look like a gaping country bumpkin, but as he leaned carelessly on his stick I was pretty certain he was counting us. Someone threw him a piece of bread, but he would not advance a step to get it. When we shouted at him he pretended to be busy heading off a cow, and retreated five or six hundred yards farther off.

I confess I was not pleased with the touching faith of our peasants in their alms-giving, "so that God would help them when *their* turn came." I've never had much reverence for a God who could be bought. Our country custom of charitable benefactions and funeral feasts are almost certainly a legacy from Roman traditions, a relic of the times when the gods were much nearer

to Man and his sins than they are now. The Jewish Jehovah, more accessible both to the dispossessed and the possessed of this world, has taken their place. But the manner of worship has not changed in the least. The faithful have surrounded their God with saints through whose mediation they think His favours can more readily be obtained. The Lord of the Heavens lets Himself be worshipped indiscriminately and thinks no evil, even of those who worship Him without form or ceremony. Faith is everything . . . form is only a concession to Humanity.

I was engaged in these speculations when the sound of Sergeant Jenciu's voice just behind broke in upon my musings: "Did you hear that, sir? There they go!" What we heard was the distant rumble of the guns. It was Sunday and, as it happened, exactly church time. The men uncovered, and as they all crossed themselves I confess I found myself overwhelmed by a wave of piety in face of the great Unknown drawing nigh. *Timor fecit Deum*, one of our old Latin ancestors once said. So I crossed myself like the rest.

We went on again. The sun rose in the heavens and his rays became uncomfortably warm. The road groaned under our hob-nailed boots and the dust began to settle on our faces and fill our eyes. After about four hours of marching, with no rest, we were showing signs of distress. Our feet dragged, we could hardly keep our eyes

open and our heads began to drop heavily forward on to our chests. The older men had the greatest difficulty in carrying their packs. After a short halt some of the men could hardly be persuaded to leave the friendly shelter of the roadside ditch. At length we reached the wooden bridge over the Bistrytsa opposite the little town of Jezupol. A surprise was in store for us here. An officer told us that a Russian grenadier lay dead not a hundred yards away. We crossed the bridge in the approved military fashion, one by one and out of step. It was extraordinary to see how the presence of danger had roused all our faculties. The old men ran like hares. All complaints of weariness were forgotten. When the bridge was passed we resumed our march, but this time by by-roads and through woods and cornfields.

When we got to the solid iron bridge over the Dniester near Wodniki I could not help saying to the men : “ Here’s the Dniester, boys. . . . You remember Eminescu’s lines :

From the Dniester to the Theiss

The lamentations of Roumanians arise. . . .”

The poet’s words woke a fresh echo in our breasts, and for the first time we realised all their charm, subtlety and tragedy. I heard a voice in my ear :

“ Suppose, sir, they asked us to fight our Bessarabian brothers. What should we do then ? ”

What reply could I give ? I had just put the same

question to myself and my mind was a prey to doubts and fears. What if there should be *no* limit to their expectations of us ?

When we reached the farther bank we had a halt, being almost overwhelmed by the heat. On the left bank our guns were already installed on the slopes, and officers, posted on the arches of the bridge, were signalling to the gunners. Immediately before and around the bridge was a line of trenches manned by recruits and beyond these trenches barbed-wire obstacles of all kinds abounded. It was the first time I had seen such a sight. Yet everything that met our gaze—bridge, river, trenches, hills, batteries—seemed to be simply whirling round us, for the sun had made us positively inebriated. The men piled arms and falling in a heap beside them, lay like logs. . . . Yet we had hardly so much as dozed before our nascent dreams were shattered by the harsh voice of the Major : “Vergatterung ! Fall in !” Groaning, we staggered to our feet, a bundle of aches and pains, and horribly stiff in the joints. The next part of our march on the hillside skirted by the railway to Halicz was a trying business. The sun beat fiercely down on our backs and the men swore volubly, the only relief open to them. The road seemed to burn our feet and we staggered on over our swaying shadows, half choked by the clouds of dust we raised. At Wodniki we were barely recognisable and looked as if we had spent all our lives in the mills

of the underworld. The men threw their packs and rifles down in the middle of the road and lay down under any shade they could find. It was hopeless to give orders, for discipline was a thing of the past for the time being.

In this village we came across a few other men of the Fàgàras Honveds, and learnt that they had been a beaten force from the first encounter. Those who had got away were still on the run. At Jezupol there must have been about a dozen of them. A volunteer from Orastie told me that my friends Goga and Sabor had been wounded, but could not say what had become of them. There was still some way to go to Halicz, and by the time we got there we no longer bore any resemblance to an army. We were more like a flock of sheep. Poor Austro-Hungarian Army, if its condition was no better than ours!

At Halicz, too, no preparations had been made for our arrival. The Major went off for orders and left me to retrieve two of our companies, which had dropped behind and could not be found anywhere. I borrowed Boldogh's horse and, crossing the Dniester, made my way into the town. At any other time I should have been much interested in this old capital of the Principality of Halicz and the seat of an historic bishopric. But now its streets were full of troops of all arms. Columns of marching men were making for the neighbouring heights while others were filing out on the Kalusz roads. The inhabitants, collected in groups before their houses,



watched the hubbub in the streets open-mouthed. Aides-de-camp with serious, anxious faces galloped hither and thither with orders. The citizens, especially the Jews, were collecting their belongings, and piling them high on carts, wagons, and even horses. I plunged into the thick of this human swarm, vainly seeking the lost companies. I queried a passing officer: "Have you seen anything of two companies of the 23rd Territorials?" He looked at me pityingly, with a wry smile: "You had better ask the Russians, my boy." I did not understand till afterwards. I tried him again: "What on earth's going on here?" "Oh, general retreat. Good-bye." I stood nailed to the spot.

After some time I came across the adjutant of the battalion, who was also searching for the two companies. To return we had to cross the bridge again and it was packed tight with ambulances, artillery and columns of infantry. I noticed that the guns were drawn by three horses instead of six, and that the men, grimy with smoke and dirt and sweating profusely, had a look of haunting terror in their eyes. Some of them, pale as corpses, were actually asleep on their horses or limbers.

It was only after a further hour's wanderings that I found the Major of the two companies, and I was at the very end of my tether. We had just done our first full day's march and felt as if we could not do a step farther. Several officers had gone sick already, while the quarter-

master, instead of bringing up the field kitchens, had returned to Stanislau the minute he heard the sound of guns. He was a true Hungarian, a worthy representative of the valiant race of Arpad.

A short distance away I noticed a General and his aide-de-camp, a hussar captain, who sat his horse abominably. The sound of a violent cannonade came from the direction of Rohatyn and a rumour spread that we were being beaten. The General swept the whole landscape with his glasses, especially the village of Meducha, where the shrapnel bursts were particularly concentrated. I strolled casually as near to him as I could get, inspired by a not unnatural desire to know what a General really thought and said :

“Those fools will soon be in the same basket,” mentioning the name of an Austrian officer entrusted with a turning movement from Rohatyn against the Russian flank.

“What the devil is all that stuff down there ?” pointing to the packed shrapnel clouds in a wood above the village of Meducha. “Our batteries are supposed to be there. You don’t mean to say that the Russians have got there already !”

I was all ears, and, to speak frankly, utterly amazed that a General should not know what was happening a few miles off. The officer turned out to be the Brigadier of our 103rd Brigade of Ardéal Territorials. I looked

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at him closely, endeavouring to discover some gleam of intelligence in his wizened face and weak, shifty eyes, but he spied me in due course and signed to me to move off. I went off at once, blushing at my transgression in penetrating the secrets of his Excellency; but I was not alone, for several other officers had felt the same impulse as myself, and had not been afraid to act upon it. The General had no friendly gesture or pleasant word for us, but merely drove us off. He had only contempt for our petty second-lieutenant's star. It was the Austrian Army all over!

I here saw the first wounded, poor, dirty and exhausted fellows on their way to the ambulances for Halicz. Their clothes were stiff with blood—black, coagulated human blood. From a stretcher in which two bearers were carrying a very serious case the blood, percolating through rough bandage and the thick canvas, dripped in great red goutts at every step.

Towards evening an order came to occupy a series of entrenchments defending the Rohatyn road. We had hardly complied with these directions before fresh orders were issued. We were to post sentries and settle down for the night in the neighbouring orchards. We collected hay and improvised rough beds, but had hardly closed our eyes before further orders arrived. We formed up in column, swearing as only soldiers can, and then discovered that movement was impossible. The road

(the only one leading to the Halicz bridge) was hopelessly blocked by baggage trains, artillery and columns of infantry coming from Rohatyn and Stanislaw. We stuck there for two hours, pushed this way and that by an endless stream of convoys. At length the Major, in mortal fear of arriving late, stopped a column with his riding-whip and we managed to thread our way through the jumbled and despairing horde.

Our destination was Meducha, and we followed our Major in the inky darkness, utterly tired out and staggering like drunkards. On our way we passed through a fortified village held by our troops. "Why on earth are we Territorials sent beyond a position held by regulars?" was the query of everyone. Soon we left the road and crossed some fields. In the obscurity every tree and bush looked like an enemy lying in wait. About midnight we found ourselves on the road again, with houses on each side in which lights flickered uncertainly for a minute or two, and then suddenly went out. "What's going on in there?" someone asked. "Cossacks, undoubtedly." In the ditches and fields by the roadside we could distinguish soldiers' packs, cloaks and arms. . . . This must have been the scene of the recent fight in which we were beaten. Yet there was no sign of either dead or wounded.

All at once there was a general stampede. I suddenly found myself in the ditch and up to my elbows in mud. "What the devil . . . Cossacks." We ran like mad,

at least as fast as the squelching marsh and thick reeds clinging tenaciously to our legs would let us run. Time after time we fell and picked ourselves up, full of water and slime. After unheard-of efforts we managed to reach a ploughed field and I rallied the men and led them back towards the fortified village. We ran down a road; but only to land in another marsh, which brought us up dead. We heard rustling in the grass, much stamping and splashing, and finally a voice. "Where's the Major?—I don't know—I think the Cossacks got him—We oughtn't to leave him behind, sir."

We held a council of war in the mud, which half engulfed many of us, and shivered, quite as much with fright as with cold. I wanted to return to Meducha—but where on earth *was* Meducha? We pulled each other out of the marsh and got back to the road, where we deployed in skirmishing formation and tried to find the village from which we had started. But having found it, we dare not enter. After a short time I heard steps on the road and saw shadows passing. I took a private's rifle and slipped behind a tree. If they were friendly they would answer, so I shouted in Roumanian: "Who goes there?" No reply. Fear almost suffocated us and the men pressed round me and levelled their rifles at the shadows. Our eyes almost left our heads in the effort to pierce the gloom. I shouted again: "Who are you? We shall fire!" "Friends." "Făgărasians?" "Yes!"

The rifles fell from our hands and we heaved a sigh of relief. They were a party of about forty, led by my company officer and the regimental doctor, Dr. Schuller. We asked them what had happened, and learned that several men had seen two Cossacks emerge from the reeds and run through our Major, who had hardly time to shout "Oh!"

We decided to withdraw to the nearest village, Tuslan, and in due course reported to the officer commanding this sector, a Major, who swore at us for cowards and sent us off to some trenches on the outskirts. When we awoke from two hours' sleep in company with our doctor we found ourselves literally frozen, and our clothes were soaking and caked with mud. At dawn we managed to find a house in which to dry our things and get warmed up with tea made by some Czech sappers. My orderly had vanished, so a change of clothes was out of the question.

It was a fine autumn morning as we resumed our march for Meducha. The sun climbed up from behind a hill and wrapped us in his grateful warmth like so many prodigal sons. When we reached the scene of our nocturnal adventure we found the whole place littered with articles of kit and equipment. Many of the men retrieved things they had thrown away in the panic. I'm ashamed to say that among the salvage was our brand-new drum.

At the entrance to Meducha were two houses crammed

to the roof with packs, kit and other belongings abandoned by fugitives or recovered from the dead, but we never managed to find out what had happened in the day or days preceding our arrival in the warm corner.

We reported, a somewhat straggling and disorderly party, to our Major, who received us with a smile and asked us if we had spent a good night, wherever we had spent it. We had hardly taken up our quarters before the shells began to rend the sky and burst with a hysterical laugh over a column of Austrian Landwehr which was ascending the hill on our right on its way to the fort of Lisa-Gora. . . . In a short time we were holding some trenches at Kopany, just outside Meducha. We had two guns with us and the 21st Territorials on our right, a regiment which had suffered very severely in attacking the Russian positions at the edge of the wood. We all formed part of the Twelfth Corps, to which the defence of the Halicz sector had been assigned. But although I made extensive inquiries I never managed to get further or fuller details.

We only had one battle here—and that was with a ration-party. On the very first evening a sharp burst of rifle-fire along the whole front almost deafened us, for we had not yet got our ear trained to this music. A dozen or so bullets flew whistling overhead and flares blazed up suddenly from a neighbouring redoubt. At first the men were horribly alarmed at this, never having seen

them before, and thinking that the Russians were bombarding us with some terrible new engine. Meanwhile a ration-party from the field kitchen had learned where we were and was trying to bring us up some hot soup. The sentry took the sound of the horse for a Cossack and let fly. His companions followed suit without waiting for orders, and the ration-party replied in kind. It was several minutes before we managed to make ourselves heard and induce the spirit of peace to return and make her home with us among the steaming pans. Happily there were neither killed nor wounded.

All the villages of this districts were deserted. Not a soul could be seen in the houses, for the Ruthenians, always suspected as actual or potential spies, had incontinently bolted. Cattle and poultry roamed at will over the countryside until requisitioned by our men, who could find no one from whom to buy them. Back they came with a goodly company of fowls, ducks, geese and pigs, and a supply of fruit. The 1st and 2nd September were indeed days of fatness and good living, and the rest of the campaign could show nothing to match them.

On September 1st a patrol of five Cossacks appeared at a distance of two or three miles. Our two guns opened fire and wounded one of them, who fell from his saddle. I couldn't help feeling genuinely sorry as I watched him bandage himself, remembering something told me by



one of our own wounded whom we retrieved in a ditch a few days back. This Roumanian, with a frightful wound in the leg, had been found by two Cossacks, who had washed his wound, bandaged him, handed over the contents of their mess-tins and shaken down the pears from a tree near by. Further, one of them, who spoke Roumanian, had asked him if he would like to be taken to their ambulance, and on his replying that he would prefer to go to our own they had lifted him on to a horse and brought him to the outskirts of Meducha. They would not actually enter the village as he would thereby merely have been exposed to the Russian bombardment and they to our bullets, but they put him down near a stream and left him, after shaking hands and wishing him good luck.

I promised myself to send out two men at night to pick up the poor Cossack if he were still alive, and if he got better he would certainly say his orthodox "*Paternoster*" for the remissions of the sin we had committed against our will.

## THE FIRST ACTIONS

*September 2nd.*

THE order to start came in the middle of the night and it was in deep silence that we left our trenches and set out for Halicz. Once more we had a long wait, for the road was encumbered with baggage-trains withdrawn by their Commanding Officer for fear of the Cossacks. Here I saw an armoured train for the first time. It was going to Stanislau, and reminded me of nothing so much as a great steel monster with giant scales and breathing out flames from its nostrils like the dragons of our story books. It glided on smoothly to the rescue of the town which the Czar's knights were threatening.

There was another blockade outside Halicz. Above us an aeroplane, one of ours by its colours, was in course of descent. I learned later that it contained a Russian General and his orderly, who were following the retreat of our troops from on high. As we were leaving the town I noticed a beggar with the face of a Dostoiewski and his breast covered with Austrian medals. With his broad forehead and narrow, furtive eyes it was impossible to mistake him for anything but a spy. I called the Major's attention to him and he had a good look, but

replied that after all there was no *proof* against him. I left him in God's keeping with the thought : " After all, if he *is* a spy what's that to me ? I haven't come to Galicia to save it by myself ! "

We soon left the Zalukiew road and found ourselves in the woods by the banks of the river Lomnitsa, which had to be crossed before we halted near Podhorki. We had marched for twelve hours without one real break, and most of the men had been up to the knees in fording the stream.

At half-past two in the afternoon we bivouacked at Bania, near Kalusz. There for the first time we found the regiment, and even the brigade, at full strength. We amused ourselves listening to the explosions in Halicz, and learned that all the stores and provisions accumulated in the depots were being blown up owing to our inability to remove them. The value of the corn alone destroyed thus was more than half a million crowns. The railway and the magnificent bridge over the Dniester went the same way. For the first time we were shown what military devastation really is. What triumphs of " Culture " could have been produced by the vast sums thus thrown away ! Think of the cost and labour involved in repairing and replacing what a few pounds of gunpowder destroyed in a few minutes !

The officers were angrily ashamed of our defeats and used no measured language. The great mistake we had

made was in under-estimating our enemy and making our attacks according to books and theories. Each unit, as it arrived in Galicia, was hastily thrown into action and the men attacked as at manœuvres, advancing all together in open formation. The Russians, usually entrenched at the edge of a wood, let us approach within three or four hundred paces and, just as we yelled our "Hourra!" for the "final assault" with the bayonet, opened rapid fire with rifles and machine-guns which decimated our ranks in a few seconds. The few who survived wandered panic-stricken all over Galicia and soon lost any military identity they ever had, while some are said to have fled without stopping to Fàgàras! At any rate this was the kind of fate that befel most of the Austro-Hungarian front-line units.

*September 3rd.*

We slept pretty late in our straw-warmed tent and I confess I began to have a liking for our nomadic existence. The less sturdy of us soon fell in, and I myself had a fearful struggle with a hacking cough, but I found a certain charm in this primitive existence and "carried on" without much difficulty.

At eight o'clock we were ready to start for Dolina. The crush on the road was such that we could only march up to half-past ten. At first we managed to keep in

column, but not an hour had passed before we merged in such a flow of trains, transport columns, prisoners, and so on, that it was impossible to say whether it was an army or a herd that was on the march. We fell into groups and ceased to care what became of the others.

In the afternoon we stopped by a wood in a park. The gamekeeper, a Pole, had three pretty daughters, who soon became my firm friends although they knew no language but their own. I likened them to three forest nymphs, especially the second one, whose charming laugh seemed to set all the oak leaves ashake. They feasted me on cakes and honey and I drank to Poland and her independence. Their father told me that the inhabitants of the district were all Ruthenians, "Porusky" as he called them, and detested us cordially. I remembered that in the village of Podhorki I had asked a peasant in one of the cottages if he were not terrified of the Russians. He almost doubled up before answering: "The Russians will cut off our heads, sir," but he said this with such composure and so cunning a gleam in his eyes that I didn't believe in his fear for a moment. These men never left their homes when the Russians came, while the Jews, the famous Galician Jews, wrinkled their foreheads and bolted, on foot, or in carts drawn by their knock-kneed nags, without further delay.

We left after an hour's rest, to resume what the Austrians call a "concentration farther back." Oh! you cannot

win battles with officials and proscriptions. Something else is wanted. . . . The news was bad. Our Lemberg army was said to be in a tight corner, and some of those who were not afraid to speak freely told me with a mysterious air that they believed the last hour of the Monarchy had sounded, while a bold peasant called out : "Don't you worry. We'll find ourselves in Roumania when we get home !"

The march seemed endless and we became too tired for anything except swearing. Some cursed the cow that produced the calf that bore the hide that formed the leather of which their packs were made. Others swore that "if they had only known" what in store for them in Galicia, wild horses would not have pulled them from the mountains of Fàgàras. If they had only known ! . . . and if they could only have the time over again ! . . .

*September 4th.*

We had to make a prodigious effort to get to Bolechov,<sup>1</sup> and about a quarter of the regiment fell out as it was. Half-way there the Brigadier held an inspection, as the result of which he had two observations to make : (i) the men must not eat while filing past before his Excellency ; (ii) the fifes and drums must be drawn up in two ranks ("Die Spielleute sollen eine Doppelfeiehe bilden").

My company commander, the Hungarian Jew Boldogh, was obsessed by all sorts of gloomy visions. He was in mortal fear of death and the Russians, and kept repeating solemnly to me: "You see. You'll find yourself company officer." I smiled and prophesied that we should both end up in the snows of Siberia.

Schwarz, another Budapest Jew and the commander of the 10th Company, had been one of the last to cross the bridge at Halicz. Terrified of the Cossacks and thinking it far better to be taken prisoner than killed, he had ordered his men to hang their scarves on their bayonets, and it was with their rifles thus bedecked with impromptu white flags that the company entered Halicz. But when they had left the danger zone it was this same Schwarz who began to browbeat the men for having been cowardly enough to tie their filthy rags to their rifles. "Dirty Wallachians" was perhaps the least offensive of his insults, yet he was one of the many who left the battlefield without seeing even the shadow of a Russian.

There was a Saxon in my company, a native of Sebes, who was the Bucharest representative of the great German chicory house of Frank. This man was clever and well educated, spoke Roumanian perfectly, and we had often talked politics together and planned partitions of the Empire. But though he agreed that the Austrian provinces should be absorbed in Germany, he absolutely

refused to allow Ardéal to be ceded to 'Roumania. "Let Roumania help herself to Bessarabia." He trembled for the fate of Saxon property and privileges in Transylvania.

The town of Bolechov was very like one of our little home towns with their strips of garden before the houses and many pretty villas. It takes its name from Bolochovan Roumanians who were the allies of the Kings of Hungary in the eleventh century; but the name is the only survival, for the population has long been submerged in the Slav tide.

We bivouacked in the village of Woloskawies. The men slept in barns or in the open, while the officers found room in the houses. Our Major had the luck to strike the house of a Ruthenian professor of Classics at Lemberg and that evening this old gentleman dined with us. He told us a good deal of Ruthenian unrest in Galicia. It appears that all power in this province is in the hands of the Poles, who do not admit the Ruthenians to any share in the government or administration. In all this district the great landowners are Poles, and Polish is the official language while Ruthenian is barely tolerated. All rich Jews transformed themselves into Poles. The Professor spoke with much scorn of the "polniche Wirtschafft"—the Polish administration, and told us that all the priests and teachers in Galicia were engaged in Russian propaganda and affiliated to Bobrinsky's



organisation. While we were taking our coffee next morning he produced a map and showed us all the territory Russia intended to annex—it included all the northern Slav provinces of the Monarchy. Later on our Major was mighty sorry he had not had the Professor arrested; he was convinced he was a spy.

*September 5th—6th.*

I was lucky enough to find a bed this night.

After a long march of twelve miles, on a road encumbered with every kind of creeping thing and interrupted at intervals, we reached the town of Stryj. It was half-empty, for only the poorest of the poor had remained behind in their houses. We went three or four miles farther on, with due precautions against surprise, to a village the name of which I did not and do not even now know as I had not my map on me.

The soldiers had not had any bread for two days and were soon hard at work begging the inhabitants for it. I believe they would willingly have paid a crown for the smallest slice, but the wretched folk had very little, and that of the black and slimy kind that sticks in your throat. Hunger and an empty stomach prescribe a special code of morals. Inside an hour, in spite of the intervention of the officers, the village was literally sacked. We were continuing our apprenticeship in war manners but had not yet got beyond the stage of timidity and remorse.

One evening someone discovered a barrel of beer, and with the help of foaming mugs and a square meal we discussed the situation of the army. The Major informed us that the southern army was about to effect its junction with the central army covering Lemberg and that a decisive battle would then taken place. In addition our left wing had made contact near Cracow with the right wing of the German Army. . . . Not much consolation !

Next day we returned to Stryj, which was even more deserted. On the roofs and walls of the houses were displayed pious images of the Virgin, Jesus and Saint Nicholas, to show the Russians that their owners were Orthodox. Even the Jewish houses had them.

*September 7th.*

A day of note, for I took over the command of the 11th Company in the absence of its chief, who had his arm frostbitten during the night. Near the village of Brigidan we ascended Hill 317 in support of some artillery. The Colonel to whom we reported, a nervous German, told us that the Russians were about eighteen miles off and that we should soon have our hands full with them.

In the village our servants washed our linen and hung it out to dry. Several men went round searching for bread and found the inhabitants, both German and Ruthenian, quite ready to sell as soon as they found they

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were Roumanians. Our drummer, Zosim, who thought the proper thing to do was to speak Hungarian, found himself refused everywhere, and was eventually obliged to produce witnesses to swear that he was a good Roumanian. Then, and then only, was he allowed some supper.

*September 8th.*

The gunners were getting ready to start. No one had anything to say to us and we might as well not have existed. The men were petrified with cold and trying to obtain a little warmth by lighting small heaps of straw. The flames quivered somewhat feebly and the columns of smoke ascended in grateful sacrifice for a day's rest to Him on high.

The order came to fall in on the road and we did so, and started off for an unknown destination. In a short time we were in the beautiful forest on the right bank of the Letnianka, the fresh morning air opened our eyes, and for the first time we saw truly what we had come to. Our faces had assumed an entirely different expression, for hunger and dirt had laid a heavy mark upon them. All signs of the inner, spiritual man had gradually vanished. Our senses were drugged and our souls slept. The men said war, like the Flood of old, is a scourge sent by God. A fervent sign of the Cross did something to restore their peace of mind, and they went on to do God's will, in expiation of their sins.

At Königsau (Rovine) we came up with the rest of the regiment and set out on the tracks of the Russians by forced marches. Ahead of us was a squadron of hussars deployed for battle. I had some talk with a few of these "Red Devils" and learned that they had a wholesome respect for the Cossack lance. In the fields round Belegi we came across some thatched shelters which had lately been occupied by the Russians. Our cooks came up and we lost no time in getting a meal. The poverty of the inhabitants of this district was extremely depressing. The women looked for all the world like sorceresses, their hair unwashed and uncombed and their clothes filthy and in rags.

We soon learned that the Russians were marching between Stryj and Mikolajow. We changed to open formation and advanced rapidly over streams and marshes and through a forest some three or four miles in depth. It was a difficult business, as we had to struggle with thick brushwood, grass as tall as or taller than ourselves, and many a quagmire. But thanks to the rest of the previous night we were in fine fettle and, making good progress, reached the road in five hours. . . . Too late! A civilian told us that two regiments of Cossacks had passed that way three hours before. But by this time they were at Stryj, feasting like kings and shouting and swaggering through the streets.

When we were having our evening tea with the Major

we learned that it had been a great mistake to evacuate Stryj, which should never have been abandoned to the Russians. We accordingly expressed ourselves freely as to the shortcomings of our Higher Command and the Intelligence service. I discovered that our Major himself was somewhat vague as to what army we belonged to. Anyhow, it was plain that an army which sent its Territorials into action first could hardly be expected to be victorious.

When we reached the shelter of some woods we lit fires and, being a race of shepherds, slept there, amid the rustling of leaves—about five hours of good sleep. . . . Our dreams were all of hope.

*September 9th.*

At last we had reached the danger zone, that mysterious area which sifts out the weak from the strong. The patriotism of the foreign officers soon dissolved and the fine-word officers began to go sick. Certainly the marches and miseries of the last eleven days had tried us pretty highly. Without an action we had lost a quarter of our effectives. I must admit that the arrangements for evacuating the sick were excellent. Dr. Schuller told me he would like to "evacuate the lot," provided he could go with them himself.

This morning I had to say farewell to Sergeant Jenciu, my right-hand man, with whom it was always a real pleasure to talk or consult. It was a severe blow, and

I felt I could hardly let him out of my sight even though he was a true brother and on his way back to Ardéal !

The day promised to be bright and fine. The sun blazed above the trees, a sight we had not seen for several days. We had a peaceful wash as a preliminary to breakfast and for the time cared very little what was in store for us. All we knew was that we had still several lazy hours to while away in the green depths of the forest, depths which secured us from the prying eyes of the foe. What an awful mistake we made !

The order came to advance towards the Dniester and attack the Russians. "Attack the Russians," almost screamed the Jew. "Of course." "Then . . . we're going to certain death ?" "It looks like it." The men took off their caps and made the sign of the Cross, and before I could reflect I found myself doing the same and turning eastwards to say my "God help us" . . . which the whole company repeated in a whisper.

I was sent through the village of Czernica to the right wing of the regiment, but unfortunately we mistook the way, lost touch with the rest of the battalion, and debouched above the village of Nadiatycze on the Dniester. The village of Roswadow on our left was being bombarded by the Russians and from behind the church two of our guns were replying in the direction of Mikolajow. I sent out four men into the water to guard against surprise while I took my bearings. They pushed boldly into the river

until they were up to their waists and hid in the reeds. My middle-aged privates displayed great activity and gave me a feeling of honest pleasure.

It was quite impossible to see what was happening on our left, for the houses and trees obstructed the view. We heard the sound of firing, and I could see an endless stream of troops pouring towards the village. We went forward ourselves at last, in fear of being left behind, and passed between rows of deserted houses. The Russian guns were pounding the village, which was packed full of our troops, but the shells were bursting too high, and the cone of bullets usually struck only the roofs and chimneys. Occasionally one came lower down and crashed into a house, sending roof and walls flying. Then we moved on quickly, and made the sign of the Cross or knelt for a brief moment. Thus, after many trials, we reached the exit of the village, where we found the 2nd (Deva) Battalion of our regiment. Their officers told me that the three other companies of my Battalion were in the front line, and that the 1st (Sibiiu) Battalion was holding the railway line on our left.

I doubted whether the Major would receive us with a smile a second time, and suspected that the whole responsibility would be thrown on me.

I doubled across a zone swept by spent bullets, not that *that* troubled me much, and I reported to the Major of the 2nd Battalion. He ordered us to take up station

as the last company of the regiment. My doubts settled, I returned to the village, and on my way managed to find under a tree some cucumber which had evidently been left behind by one whose attention had suddenly been called elsewhere. It relieved both hunger and thirst, so I was doubly fortunate.

My regiment advanced rapidly by companies on a line between the railway and the Dneister, opposite Mikolajow. Our right was concealed by some old willows on the river-bank, but our left was very much exposed to the view of the Russian artillery, and we were plentifully sprinkled with shrapnel. The shells burst pretty accurately over us, and several men came back wounded in the hands and feet. There were only two companies ahead of us. At the same moment I received orders to hold some fortified lines behind our artillery, as the Russians were trying to take us in reverse. As we returned through the village we spoke to some of these wounded, and it was painful to see so many wrecks and cripples from our battalions in the ambulances.

Half an hour later we received orders to withdraw. I did my best to rally the company, so that the movement might be executed in some sort of order, but it was hopeless. The men began to run helter-skelter over the fields. The Russian artillery soon discovered us, and did its best to see us home. We did not stop until we had reached the forest from which we had started that morning. There



a Major of the 21st Territorials told me that it contained two regiments of Cossacks, and there was nothing for it but to take the only route open to us, that leading to Drohobitz. Near the village of Rudniki we waited about in the open fields, and to keep the men out of mischief I allowed them to gather the cabbages, which were plentiful, and send them to the cooks, which had just come up.

The other companies gradually turned up, and in course of time we found ourselves a regiment once more. My company was the only one that had escaped without casualties, so for once luck had favoured my natural desire to spare my men, who themselves could not get over the fact that Taslăuanu's company had come out intact, and gave me a reputation which finally reached Ardéal. All the other companies had suffered heavily. Some of the men had spent several hours in front of Mikolajow, exposed to the full brunt of the enemy's fire. The Russians had been hidden in the houses, and fired on them with a machine-gun installed on the church steeple. The Major told us that even in the line of fire he had eaten some bacon and had a pleasant little nap.

Three of the officers had been wounded: Horwath, a congenial Jew; Nasta, a Roumanian notary from Zarnesti, severely wounded in the thigh; and Kvasnovski, a magyarised Pole, notary of a commune in the Făgăras district, who had had the little finger of his left hand

smashed by a bullet. Clever little bullet! Vargha, the ensign, a Hungarian professor, was missing, while as for our Adjutant, the famous Boldogh, he had bolted, and in his flight tumbled into a pond and sprained a foot.

Before evening we were completely smothered in troops in retreat. The Russians discovered us and sent over some shells. Some ducks on a pond near by took fright and began to quack lustily. "Those ducks have been bought! They are there to betray us!" was Dr. Schuller's joking comment.

We had just time enough for a hasty meal before we started out again, and it was all we could do to drag ourselves along anyhow, without any attempt at order. When we reached Ugartsberg, via Medenice, at two o'clock in the morning, we literally fell in a heap. That day, which had witnessed our baptism of fire, had been a sorry one for us, as it cost us half the regiment.

*September 10th.*

We crossed the Dniester early this morning, and on the way to Nikula met many Russian prisoners and long files of wounded. In a field by the roadside was a crowd of peasants from evacuated villages. A sad, but common enough, vision of war.

We were told that the Austro-German Armies had been victorious all along the line, and that William was about

to dictate peace. I need hardly say that this news left us sceptical. A further rumour came round, that we were to have a day's rest, and this touched us more closely. In the afternoon we left for Ryczikow, without entering the village, which was being heavily bombarded by the Russian artillery. There must have been some terrible fighting in the fields where we stopped, for we could see nothing but new graves, with crosses made of sticks, piles of ammunition and accoutrements, and many unburied corpses, which, I think, had been left for our benefit. They were meant to give us the illusion of victory. Unfortunately, we found in a house near by a heap of our own arms—I should say at least a thousand—and this somewhat marred the picture.

Just off the road a dead Russian was lying on his back, his face contorted, his lips flecked with foam, and his arms crossed. His large, glassy eyes stared vacantly at the sky. He was a fine man of twenty-five or so, whom Fate had destined to this horrible end: a rotting corpse in a field, victim of human savagery. His torn tunic disclosed a pool of blood in which the worms were already beginning their loathsome work. Someone had turned his pockets inside out, and they flapped heavily in the wind. Death had left a sarcastic smile on his lips. He seemed to be railing at Humanity, with its so-called culture and morality. I could almost hear him say: "Vile brutes! You have killed me, robbed me, and left me as prey to

the beasts and the worms. . . . You can go now, for I have no more to give you." A sword stained with blood lay near him, and I picked it up and brought it away as a hideous souvenir of the horror and disgust I had known that day.

That night Bogdan, one of our stretcher-bearers, went by himself into the woods, and was attacked and stabbed in the arm by a civilian, a Ruthenian, who made off before our patrols could catch him.

*September 11th.*

Our cooks came up, and were received with great applause. We had a solid meal, and made the most of it, as it might be heaven knows how long before we saw them again.

Orders came that we were to envelop the Russians at Mikolajow. On this occasion my particular duty was to hold the Lubiana hill—the post of honour and danger—with two platoons. We set out, taking care to conceal ourselves in the ditch by the roadside to avoid observation. We went through a line of guns, all spitting forth projectiles and making an infernal noise. We were astounded to find that they were not under cover. Even the gunners and parties bringing up ammunition seemed to despise any form of shelter.

On the way up we heard that the Russians were already in retreat, and we returned to Dmytrze, where the whole regiment formed up, and company by company we advanced in open formation on Horbacza. As we approached this village we met with terrible shell-fire, which swept away one line after another. Death raged all around us, but we pressed on unheeding. An explosion in the air over my head shook me like a rag, and I fell in a heap, but it seemed a mere mechanical process to pick myself up and resume my place at the head of my company. A shell fell right in the middle of the first platoon, and killed Streitfeld and several men, but nothing stopped our steady advance to the village under the hill. On our left were some Bukowina soldiers of the 41st Infantry. They went forward with the same reckless courage, though many bit the dust. The wounded groaned, and started to drag themselves to the ambulances. Bullets whistled through the village streets, and the men took refuge in the houses, but the officers drove them out again with their swords and revolvers. Our turn came round to climb the hill, and we started with that infernal song in our ears. I could see men falling all ways. . . . The companies were soon hopelessly mixed up, and in a short time I found I had only a handful of men left. I had not the remotest idea what had happened to the Major or the officers of the other platoons. . . . I could only keep on croaking, "Forward!"

I came across a line of Honveds, who would not move, and threatened them with my revolver. . . . They had two officers with them, a captain and a lieutenant of the regulars ! These shameless scoundrels were trying to sneak away !

Just ahead of us was a great forest, and I could hear some of our men cheering. We ran down the hill in hopeless disorder, and from a hill on our left the Russians poured in a heavy flanking fire, which caused us heavy losses. We all cheered lustily, and the woods and valleys echoed our cry and carried it far and wide. I stopped in a godsend of a ditch, two hundred yards from the forest. The Russian fire counselled prudence.

A little later I heard my friend Michaelis, the publisher of Sibiu, shouting out "Elore !" ("Forward !") in his ludicrous Hungarian. Bugles blowing and drums beating, about twenty men followed him. I saw them vanish into the forest still bellowing "Elore !" Just on the edge of this forest a house was burning, and tongues of flame stretched out menacingly towards the trees. Then, quite suddenly, there came a great silence. . . . Evening fell. There were forty or fifty men in my trench, Territorials, regulars, reservists, of many different regiments and companies.

We had just heard that there were many Bessarabians in the Russian ranks, so here were men from Transylvania and the Bukowina, compelled to fight against their own

brothers. . . . We cursed the country, the forest, and the evil fate which had brought us all together to murder our own kith and kin.

We waited, and before long shadows were seen coming from the wood, and our numbers were in due course swelled to 150 or so, including Michaelis, Comanescu and Fincu, the two last from the 1st Battalion. Our regimental Commander sent us an order to stay where we were, but a military freak caused us to scatter. A bugle suddenly blared forth on our right, within a few yards of the enemy. We could hardly believe our ears. Comanescu and Fincu thought their battalion was being assembled, and went off, taking half the men with them. Ten minutes later the Russians opened a violent fire upon us, and those who had so rashly left us were immediately scattered. . A new terror appeared for us who remained behind, for it seemed certain that our own guns, behind and to the right of us, would reply and we should be caught between two fires. After half an hour, however, the Russian fire died down, and we lost no time in making our way back to the top of the hill. We spent most of the night in an enormous shell-hole, shivering with cold. German Michaelis was very bitter in his reproaches for my disregard of orders, but I soon shut him up with the suggestion that he should go back again if he liked it. I could only mock at his untimely insistence on discipline.

*September 12th.*

As soon as it became light a violent Russian bombardment compelled us to retire in disorder, and just as I came out of my dug-out a bullet shaved my ear—so near and yet so far! Our friend Boldogh had a finger shot off, and evil tongues whispered that he had done it himself.

As we retired through the village we left forty-seven wounded men to the care of the Russians. The yard was full of arms and ammunition, and I took the opportunity of helping myself to a Mannlicher rifle, which became my constant companion throughout the campaign. You will have realised by now that the sword and revolver, the officer's weapons, are singularly useless in this war, especially the sword. Only officers who liked beating men had retained it, and everyone else had long since taken to the rifle.

Our retirement, a disorderly and apparently undirected affair, was first to the west, then to the south-west. At the cost of unprecedented efforts, which were none the less becoming habitual, we marched until midnight. At Hruszow the companies were reorganised. The men, perspiring profusely, and one mass of mud as the result of several washless days, smelt like carrion. We slept in a barn, huddled up anyhow.



*September 13th.*

We marched all day, and at ten o'clock halted at Kulczyzyc, near Sambor. The town, in its halo of electric light, looked like a city of fairyland, and as it was long since we had seen a real town, we felt the summons of civilisation strongly. What wouldn't I have given for a bath and a warm, soft bed! . . . The inhabitants were anything but well disposed, and we had to hammer on their doors with the butt-ends of our rifles before they would even open them. My bedroom was an empty garret and my bed a heap of straw.

*September 14th.*

The owner of the house had bolted to Cracow, leaving it to the care of the servants. I saw an extremely handsome Ruthenian girl here—quite a novel experience.

At eight o'clock the whole regiment fell in, and we discovered that its numbers had dropped to half. There were seven officers left in my battalion, and the complement of my company was 133. The order came round to beat and kill all stragglers. Company officers were to march at the tail-end of the column, and no one should be allowed to fall out without permission.

On our way to Straszewice we passed through Sambor-Bereznica. The road was in a shocking condition, and it

rained steadily the whole day, a fine rain of the watering-can sort in the morning and a regular deluge in the afternoon. We reached Straszewice about five o'clock, more dead than alive, but although my life was made unbearable by a hacking cough I felt quite ready for anything, being urged on by an uncontrollable curiosity to know whither our retreat was leading us and what would be the end of it. . . .

At nightfall the cooks, with their load of good things, came up with us. The officers got together, and we did credit both to the food and drinks provided. Here we heard for the first time that the Russians had reached Körösmezö. Of course we were at one in pouring scorn on Austrian strategy and tactics, for our glasses were full of all kinds of excellent wines, requisitioned from the cellars of Polish squires.

We undressed and went to sleep happy, delivered of the only desire we had lately known.

*September 15th.*

A warm, sunny day of rest, with golden opportunities to dry our clothes, wash and shave—events of surpassing importance on active service.

We noticed that here, too, the women alone had remained behind, and it was horribly depressing to see their tears and distress. Their garden railings had

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vanished in our fires, and even what was left to them had to be shared with the men. I tried the rôle of comforter by offering some of them a bowl of meat soup, and they rewarded me in turn with a couple of badly cooked eggs.

In the evening the men took some straw from a farmer-squire's yard, and the indignant proprietor threatened them with a claim for damage. The only reply I gave him was to send the men back fully armed, with orders to shoot if anyone attempted to prevent them removing the stuff. No privileges for the rich in time of war.

*September 16th.*

We left for Staremiasto. On the march I came across an old friend, Dr. Alexander Bogdan, a professor at Brasso. He was riding a horse, as he had been appointed Adjutant to Major Demetrius Florian, commanding a battalion of the 24th Territorials, also a friend of mine. This unexpected meeting put us in good heart. Bogdan used to possess a fine beard, but he had shaved it off. "So you've made a present of your beard to the Czar?"

Florian noticed a piece of green carpet (a legacy from my late comrade Streitfeld, who fell on September 11th) sticking out on my saddle: "Good Lord! Tâslăuanu carries his office furniture about with him even on the battlefield."

We met other Roumanians who had all taken part in the fighting.

Just outside Staremiasto we were rejoined by the 5th Territorials, of Seghedin, their caps and tunics adorned with tricoloured ribbons. They were real Hungarians, of course, and had not yet been in action, and we could not help remarking that they were the first Hungarian unit we had seen since we left Halicz—and it was intact! All the rest we saw were Roumanians. Truly Ardéal had been bodily removed to Galicia!

It was plain that Tisza and the Austro-Hungarian High Command were practising on the battlefield their peacetime policy of exterminating nationalities. It was not by pure chance that we found Galicia so full of Roumanians.

We bivouacked at Starasol. Strict orders were issued that discipline, which had become lax, must be maintained. Looting and straggling were forbidden. Perhaps as the result of this, several missing men returned to the regiment, and the strength of my company increased to 189.

Several cases of dysentery were discovered, and the doctors began to be apprehensive of epidemics.

*September 17th.*

Sleep carries on her healing work even in camps, and we had still a full day's rest before us at Starasol. In this little town we actually began to pay ready money for what we requisitioned, and we found the shopkeepers ready enough to sell what they had. One old lady, the

owner of a diminutive haystack, was much distressed that she had only been paid a hundred crowns, but we generously consoled her at the expense of the State.

The men were turned on to dig and wire trenches, and the site selected was a hill facing Iwary. I may say that we had at length learned the art of war from the Russians. The Major was extremely angry because most of the men had thrown away their entrenching tools. In the presence of Dejenariu, a friend of mine, he snapped out: "These Roumanians are a dirty crowd." From that time forth I lost all friendly feeling for him.

He was not a pleasant-tempered man at the best, and never ceased to express his displeasure with Roumania, which could easily have held up all the Russian Odessa Army Corps. "In any case," he said, "Germany would willingly have given Roumania Bessarabia, a province inhabited by Roumanians." It's so easy to give away what belongs to someone else. . . .

We here learned that Cossack patrols were approaching Sambor, and made haste to get some sleep in case we should be wanted later on.

*September 18th.*

At six o'clock in the morning we left for Starzava. The road was clear and we felt in good marching trim. The Staff was comfortably installed in a fine house of two

storeys in the town. We knew it at once by the row of cars in the courtyard and the little yellow-and-black flags over the door. We also soon discovered the stores, only to swear lustily because we were refused a further ration.

We shared the road with an interminable file of refugees, mainly Jews. A girl described them as the "second army," and told us that they had been on the road three weeks without the faintest notion as to where they were going. We had seen many of these Jews during the last few days, poor wretches who had left everything behind them except a few belongings on their backs, and, as a rule, a cow to share their wanderings. Just outside Starzava there was a camp for Jewish refugees, and what with their destitution and the rain they presented a picture of truly piteous misery. Hundreds of dirty, ugly faces, drawn with hunger and terror, could be seen on all sides peering from drays and carts piled high with domestic utensils, furniture, poultry, women and children. The innocent faces of babies and here and there a slip of a girl were the only bright spots in that bleak landscape.

The rain compelled us to call a halt. We were drenched to the bone and sheltered in an inn, likewise full of fleeing Jews. The men invaded the barn and stables, but for want of room many had to stay out in the wet. At midday an order came to return to the village. On the crowded road it took us two hours to do a mile, thanks to the mud which came to our knees, and when we arrived our quarters

were already occupied, so we had to go back whence we came. The men pitched their tents in the open fields and we managed to buy hay and straw. The Jew innkeeper demanded 200 crowns for a cartload of hay. I slept in a room with a Jewish family of eight children and we were in a disgusting mess, but I could no longer be impressed by anything.

This day we buried the first cholera victim in our battalion, a private in the 9th Company.

*September 19th.*

Twelve solid hours, marching to Ustrzyki, a half-deserted market-town. We took up our quarters among the Jews, and I slept royally in an inn, although the proprietor was extremely reluctant to give me anything to eat.

A rumour circulated that Roumania had come in and invaded Ardéal. The news warmed my heart and my dreams and visions returned in all their old force. We also heard that our retreat would only stop in Hungary, and when I told the men they wrecked the Jewish innkeeper's parlour from sheer joy.

*September 20th.*

It rained all night and through the morning without stopping, so it was useless to think of resuming our march. The Jew's wife made good use of the hours of darkness

and her little oven, and by morning had a good supply of fresh bread to sell to the men at a reasonable price. Before long I had struck up an acquaintance with some of these Jewesses and learned from them that at least two years before the Ruthenian peasants had been saying to them: "You'll sell your stuff for nothing when the Russians come." The innkeeper, however, fleeced and cheated the men without mercy and was appropriately treated in consequence.

Noticing that I was more inclined to be friendly than the other officers these poor wandering Jews came to me with their woes and queries. Should they go or should they stay? I advised them to stay where they were. What would become of them all in Hungary? As if that happy country was not already sufficiently afflicted with this plague of locusts! I entered into conversation with all these Jews because I wanted to know more of them, though I was horrified at their complete lack of scruples, even in the most intimate and sacred matters. They were quite prepared to buy a girl from her own father and mother.

I had been the only officer of my company for more than a week, but to-day a platoon commander from the 1st Battalion came to us, Julius Weindl, a Saxon merchant in a big way of business at Sibiu. He was very tall, phlegmatic and sensible enough, but otherwise without any special military virtue.



At length we started out again in the mud and rain, but this time there was no stopping us, for we had our faces towards the Carpathians. We reached Uherce at seven o'clock in the evening. Before we could take up the quarters assigned to us in a peasant's cottage we had to turn out several officers of the 22nd Territorials who were comfortably installed there, but we were well rewarded by a good night's rest, though the men were far worse off billeted in barns and outhouses.

*September 21st*

Affairs went from bad to worse. We had already got used to hopeless disorder on the march and even more hopeless confusion in billets, but this day was a mere mad medley. Men ought not to be treated thus in any circumstances. At eight o'clock in the morning the battalion fell in. We first spent two hours in a ditch by the roadside while an endless column of transport passed slowly by. Then we managed to get as far as Lisko and things improved a little. The country was mountainous, which pleased us greatly, and the sun took sides with us and did his best to dry the roads. All the signs, notices, etc., in the town were Polish, in Latin characters. Hitherto they had always been both in Polish and Ruthenian, the latter conspicuous by its Cyrillic characters. The inhabitants seemed perfectly calm, gave us a friendly reception and,

what was more important, produced food willingly. The women followed us with their eyes and had a ready smile for us. They were very handsome and their expression was serene and remarkably frank.

We marched by night from Zagorz to Czaszyn, only a few miles, but it took us till eleven o'clock. From time to time we had to stop on the road, jammed hopelessly in the great throng, unable to see a yard ahead of us, and frozen to the bone. Vainly did we curse the day we were born. However, we survived this torture, only to find abominable billets—a heap of straw in a reeking cottage—at the end of it.

## CHOLERA SPREADS

*September 22nd.*

A HORRIBLE day in rest billets, pestered by wind and rain. It was the regimental pay-day, and for once the men got provisions and wine in addition to their pay. We washed our clothes—and ourselves—and spent the rest of the day wallowing in the dirt of the wretched hovels which pass for houses in this district.

Throughout Galicia you find the house, barn and stables, in fact, the whole block of farm buildings, under one roof. Very few rooms have a chimney, and the smoke usually drifts away through a hole in the ceiling. Every household has its hand-mill, and the corn is passed through a wooden sieve which lets the bran through. The food of the inhabitants is of the most primitive description—milk and potatoes. Bread, a black substance, is only seen on high days and holidays. I doubt if there is a more poverty-stricken region in the world than Galicia ; yet our men say that the soil is very good. The local folk are too ignorant and lazy to do anything with it.

At dinner, my friend Dr. George Măcelar, barrister of Miercurea, and now of the Army Service Corps, did the honours in some fine Tokay, while the Major announced

that Germany was coming to the rescue with twelve corps, while Roumania had entered Ardéal as an ally and Italy had attacked France.

I knew nothing of all that, and did not want to.

*September 23rd.*

We had a long and exhausting march to Oslawica, close to the Hungarian frontier. For three days we saw nothing but dead horses by the roadside, and one of our party counted no less than thirty in the space of two miles. Apparently, even these poor brutes could not stand the torture of our "tactical retreat." The men, aching with hunger, pulled themselves together for a final effort and stamped bravely through the Galician mud, sustained by the thought that their direction was homewards. I felt as feeble as any of them, and trailed along behind my company—as the regulations prescribed—not thinking about anything; in fact, incapable of thinking. Although I had a horse, I preferred to march on foot, the exercise doing something towards keeping me warm.

At eleven o'clock at night we halted in some muddy fields decorated with stagnant ponds. The men tore down some handy railings to make fires, and then lay down in the mud.

*September 24th.*

The Commander of my regiment, who only yesterday was threatening to shoot the men if they destroyed the railings, came up this morning and ordered my battalion only (the 3rd) to do some drill by way of punishment. So there we were, in the middle of our "tactical retreat," doing the "Right Turn," "Shoulder Arms," and so on.

The number of cholera cases began to increase in the most alarming manner. We received strict orders to keep right away from the 24th Territorials, in which the disease was spreading at the rate of fifty men a day. But our four regiments of Ardéal Territorials were left to their own devices. No preventive measures were taken, and the cases were not isolated. The doctors soon became highly enraged with the military authorities and went in a body to protest to the Brigadier. Staff-Captain Homolya, a pompous and stupid Hungarian, replied that "it didn't matter whether Ardéal regiments died from cholera or Russian bullets."

Nine men were buried to-day on a hill by the banks of the Oslavica, whose limpid murmur was their sole requiem. A wagon conveying victims was standing near by, the driver himself being a cholera case. Our General happened to pass by, and, noticing this melancholy object, gave orders for it to be removed to the nearest village. He did not say who would remove it, or how, but conveniently went off in his car.

At four in the afternoon someone took pity on us, and we had a rest. By a piece of great good luck I was billeted on a rich and hospitable farmer. We dined well, on eggs and milk, but without bread, which could not be found, even for officers. My friend Rotschild, the battalion Supply Officer, explained that there was no bread because Territorials did not have field bakeries. There had indeed been some silly rumour that men were dying for want of bread, but the reply had always been that "the difficulties were insuperable." So during these last three weeks the men had only had (in all) two and a-half rolls per head.

*September 25th.*

A further eight men died of cholera during the night, and dozens were stricken down. I had my company out and gave them a serious lecture on the folly and danger of drinking water and eating uncooked fruit and vegetables, and wound up with a fervent appeal to remember their wives and children, who awaited their return, and for their sakes, if for no other, to avoid contagion like sin. Many of them broke down at this, but few, alas! took my advice. Hunger proved too sharp a spur.

We returned from Oslavica by the same road by which we had come, and our first stop was at Komaneza, for the simple reason that we had no further orders and did not know where to go. The retrograde movement

alarmed the men, who turned their eyes towards the Hungarian frontier at each step farther away. After considerable delay, orders came to make for Czystohorb, in order to cover the retreat of the Seventh Corps. We all believed our real destination was quarantine, and groaned to think it was in Galicia.

The village had not yet been abandoned, and so it was possible to make good our supplies, for the Ruthenian peasants were well-disposed, if timorous, and brought out all they had. Their costume was not unlike that of the Slovaks in Hungary, and we noticed in particular that their children were numerous and remarkably fine.

My company was told off to provide sentries for a sector of some three or four miles between the hamlet of Puste and Jawornick. At the top of a hill near Jawornick I asked some women to show me the shortest way to Czystohorb. When they saw me riding towards them they began to scream, and incontinently bolted. Night came down, and I became seriously alarmed. At the bottom of an unearthly ravine I discerned a shadow, which vanished into the neighbouring stream as I approached. It was a Ruthenian peasant, and as I knew only a few words of Ruthenian, it was quite impossible to explain fully what I wanted, and he, axe in hand, stood rooted to the spot and did not answer. I felt myself possessed by unholy rage at the thought of being at the mercy of such ruffians, and for one mad

moment I wanted to kill him. I pushed my horse towards him and assumed a threatening air, and at last, partly from inclination, but mostly through fear, he condescended to lead me to the village.

*September 26th.*

When the sentries were relieved this morning we found many men stricken down either with cholera or cold. Sergeant Werner, a splendid Saxon from Sibiiu, who had left seven children behind him at home, had been carried away dead on a stretcher.

The whole battalion was employed digging trenches until ten o'clock, when the order came to march to Zubensko, via Komancza, Radosyce and Oslavica. The peasants who came to see us off began to weep copiously, and a Ruthenian who knew a few words of Hungarian wailed that the Russians would come to loot and burn their houses.

We left a few of our dead in the village. Cholera had wrought far more mischief than the Russians, and I was specially grieved for the death of Sergeant Masàr, of Porumbac, the gayest and bravest soul in the battalion. On the outskirts of the village a dead soldier lay stretched on a bundle of hay, and the Jewish owner of an inn hard by stood twisting his straggling locks, while the tears trickled down his white beard. But our eyes were fixed on the approaching frontier.



On the way we met some Roumanians from Beci-Kerek in a regiment of the common army. So even the inhabitants of the remotest corners had been brought up for the defence of the Hapsburg eagle! . . .

At Komancza we passed before our General Headquarters. We found the men extremely busy—in emptying a cask of wine into bottles. Of course, our Generals were preparing to celebrate our victories.

Falling night made us quicken our steps, but hunger made large and increasing inroads on our strength. We had had nothing to eat all day, and it was five days since the men had had a bread ration.

Oslavica was full of new graves and dead horses. A doctor stopped me to ask if we would take a cholera case with us, but after we had looked more closely at him and discovered he belonged to the 21st, I'm afraid we passed on. It was not our regiment, and it was all we could do to get ourselves along. It was pitch dark by the time we reached Smolnik, and the last stage to Wola-Michova was still before us, but there at last our retreat ended and we were told we should remain a week or two. We expressed our gratitude by making the sign of the Cross with a fervour we had not felt for many days.

## REST

*September 27th.*

SUNDAY, the holy day. It was now a month since we Christians had heard Mass or even the sound of a priest's voice, and to-day we all felt an impelling need to thank God for having kept us safely so far. We had not a chaplain, but the men assembled in a barn, and a deacon, from God knows what parish, took the service. It was a calm, beautiful day, and hearing the plaintive hymns of our Church, I went up and joined in. The deacon was reading from an *octoih* (missal) with red edges, and the thirty men present sang the words after him. Some by the doorway listened intently on their knees, and as I leaned against a railing the spirit of the gathering entered into me also and I could not keep the tears from my eyes. A thrill of religious ecstasy shook my whole being, and I felt as never before the supreme need of belief in a Power who watches over the lives of men. Blind faith, a kind of fatalism, swamped all other feelings, for it is at these times, when strength fails, nerves go to pieces and the physical being collapses, that men turn to the Almighty Being, the Lord of all things, Who alone can help. The thought of divine assistance revives and sustains the physical organism.

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A deep sigh made me turn my head. I was in a narrow street, on the other side of which I noticed Private Reit, of Bran, on his knees under a tree. He was praying with such fervour that I felt consumed with pity. His expression was one of utter self-surrender. His body was almost bent double, and his head hung forward on his breast. Only his lips moved, except when he occasionally made the sign of the Cross to emphasise his prayer. . . . Near him was a pool of blood and some horrible remains still steaming. Our butchers had just slaughtered a cow, and in their haste to fill our bodies, as hungry as our souls, they had forgotten to remove its entrails.

I have already said that hunger introduced a code of morals which has nothing to distinguish it from that of primitive man. Plenty of the men had deserted or gone over to the Russians rather than endure the miseries of war, and more than once we had heard voices in the ranks threatening to stop fighting if food were not forthcoming. The High Command had its eye on these disorders and issued the following :—

“ROUTINE ORDERS.

“By the orders of the Supreme Command, all men convicted of inciting to revolt, desertion, treason, foreign enlistment, espionage against the army, breach of the peace, robbery and murder, will be shot or hung out of

hand. The same punishment shall be inflicted on all men caught in the act of looting (in villages or private houses).”

There was only one thing missing from this comprehensive regulation: an appropriate penalty for the crime of dying of hunger or cholera.

This was a rest day. One company had to post sentries three miles away on the Baligrod heights. We could not help smiling at this precaution. At the beginning of the war our first-line troops had suffered disaster through their failure to provide against surprise. Now that the enemy was five-and-thirty miles away we slept with sentries to watch over us.

We never got quite accustomed to the craze of our superiors for indicating sentry posts on a map when they might just as well have pointed them out with a finger, seeing that the hills were there before our eyes. Throughout the campaign the directing staff were always to be seen with their noses buried in maps, but the Reserve and Territorial officers, who did not know their way about these documents, went wrong every time they were told to occupy a position by the map. Besides, our small-scale maps were not up to date, and sometimes did not show the terrain. All the roads were not shown, and every now and then we found fields where a wood was supposed to be. Once upon a time we supposed that the

regular officers could beat us hollow at map-reading, but we found many of them with no sense of direction, who went badly astray, map in hand. More than one of the early Austrian defeats was due to this defect in the officers' military education.

In the evening the men gathered round their fires and improvised *doîna*. The voices of Doîcou and Sebes the Great rang out sweet and clear to the accompaniment of Zosim's flute, and in the peace of this calm Galician night seemed to echo the sorrows of a whole people.

We officers kept a late night in the Major's house, filling it with smoke and the roar of our voices, while the excellent Hungarian wine our Hersch had been thoughtful enough to provide came in for a due share of attention.

*September 28th.*

We spent the whole day digging trenches for the defence of the village. It was a hard task, as the necessary implements were lacking and a chill wind cut through us. I heard here that the news of Roumania's entry into Ardéal was false. I never believed it, but was sorry to hear definitely it wasn't true.

Brigade orders to-day contained a notification that Zeppelins would shortly fly over us. As a matter of fact I never saw one the whole time I was in Galicia. We

were told again that the German army was at Cracow on its way to help us, but if so it never came my way.

We could hear the guns rumbling in the distance, but no one could say exactly where the engagement was proceeding.

*September 29th—October 2nd.*

We were mighty pleased to be driving off the Russians. but could make no headway at all against cholera—a much more implacable and horrible enemy. Here at Wola-Michova we evacuated cholera cases at the rate of hundreds a day. Men whom we had left strong and healthy the evening before, lay next morning on the roads or in barns, slowly turning blue-black and with dark rings beneath their eyes. In some cases the victim's legs suddenly failed him, and he fell stiff to the ground. In others, fearful convulsions marked the onset of the malady.

After unpardonable delay, certain measures were adopted. The victims were isolated and "treated" with tincture of iodine, while the worst cases were evacuated to Hungary. Yet no one thought of anti-choleric vaccination. I began to be thoroughly uneasy. Death from cholera would be a highly inglorious ending, though I had taken every conceivable precaution against contagion. For six weeks I hadn't touched a drop of water,

and had washed my hands in disinfectant before every meal. No one had been allowed to touch my plates or anything else, so I had reasonable ground for thinking myself safer than the rest. Still, it was well known that the infection had made headway in the village, for a peasant had died of it only a few days before.

There is nothing which is not expected of a soldier in war-time. The Major came up to-day and told me to throw a bridge over the Oslava, to improve the approaches to the line of positions we had dug. Behold me, then, in a few minutes bridge-builder and road-maker. I spent the first quarter of an hour trying to remember all the bridges I had ever seen, and at length evolved a scheme which I communicated to the men. In three days we finished a bridge twenty-seven yards long by nine wide, over a pretty rapid river. The necessary material, especially the timber, was mercilessly requisitioned from the peasants' cottages, whose owners protested vigorously and wailed aloud. Who was going to pay for it? The Mother of God or Czar Nicholas?

An Army Order (Armeebefehl No. 6210) laying down the proper way to fight the Russians was read out on parade to-day. Our enemies, it appeared, were fond of climbing roofs and trees in order to catch us napping. They had a first-rate knowledge of field fortification, and always held their lines with desperate tenacity. We were exhorted to imitate their defensive system, and

specially recommended to note their tricks of digging sham trenches and putting caps on bushes and sticks in order to draw our fire. We learned that they had received special orders to fire on men with yellow piping on their uniforms. We officers were indicated.

Of course, the Order wound up with a declaration that the Russians were defeated and retreating, and that Germany, having built a fortified line in France, was turning the bulk of her forces against Russia. The Major tried to look as if he believed it, but I may say that incredulous glances were exchanged between the officers. . . .

That night we played cards and indulged in mild revelry. We howled campaigning songs in our snug houses while cholera victims groaned and agonised outside. The brutalizing process was proceeding apace, and death had long since ceased to be impressive.

I went off for my round of sentry inspection. There was a little fir copse near by, and there I pitched my tent and had a fire made. One of the men suddenly fell ill at the tent door, lost consciousness, and turned black. The others said he had been eating mushrooms. It was almost more than two men's work to get him down to the village.

All the sentries on my beat were at their posts and wide awake enough. The wind on the crest was enough to blow one bodily away, but when I reached the highest



point within a few yards of my last sentry I stopped involuntarily. He was a Roumanian, and had swathed himself in his tent-cloth, drawing up one flap to make a hood. Leaning on his rifle—like a shepherd on his crook—he was gazing, wrapt and motionless, into the distance. There he stood, the shepherd of the Carpathians, as the life of the mountains and long centuries of tradition, handed down from father to son, had made him. The lord of mountain and meadow remained a shepherd, even in the Imperial livery.

The last rays of sunset gave him a blood-red halo, and he seemed to me the very sign and symbol of my oppressed people, which has ever owed its safety and freedom to its forests. It is in the mountain districts only, far from the sordid tyranny of the plains, that the proud passion for independence has been preserved uncontaminated.

I went up close without disturbing him. "Well, Oarza—don't move!—what are you thinking about?" "What *should* I be thinking of, sir, if not of what's going on down there, at home? . . . It's a long and weary business, this Emperor's battle, and I'm surprised we haven't made peace yet. Can't our Emperor see he's on the losing side? Then if only the Country\*

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(\*) When a Roumanian says, "the Country," he always means Roumania, the independent kingdom.

would move, what a difference that would make. . . .  
What on earth are they waiting for ? ”

I was not mistaken in my shepherd, so I left him  
some cigarettes by way of consolation.

We sat round the fire, and I had a good long talk  
with my orderly, Victor Chichernea, of Grid. He told  
me a good deal of his life in America, including some  
devastating experiences in an iron foundry. Zosim played  
some of our native airs on his magic flute, while Catsavei,  
ex-gamekeeper from the Făgăras district, told me that  
a stag was roaming round and asking to be stalked.  
I had no respite from this topic until the beast had been  
laid low.

Roumanians are all and at all times the same, even  
on the battlefields. It is the poetical side of them that  
gives them so much charm.

## ON THE HEELS OF THE RUSSIANS

*October 3rd.*

A SUDDEN order to start for Dolzyca. The trouble was that there were two villages of this name in opposite directions. We held a short debate, and decided to make for the one in the valley of the Solinka.

"My" bridge creaked in every joint under the unexpected weight put upon it, and I was so interested in the fate of my own creation that I stopped behind to see how it fared when the transport came along. A young Jewess, who seemed to have taken a liking for me, asked if the Russians were as wicked and savage as we made out, and from the vantage-point of my horse I hastened to reassure her with a blatant compliment: "A pretty girl like you will tame the Cossacks easy enough. I expect they'll take you for an ikon!" The lady smiled and blushed, actions which certainly increased her charm.

The wagons came along one by one, and the bridge squeaked, groaned and buried its trestles in the sandy bottom of the Oslava, but nevertheless held out victoriously. I felt rather pleased to be leaving the good folk of Wola-Michova something really useful, and I

pressed the fair Israelite's hand all the more warmly because she expressed open regret that "a gentleman so distinguished as Mr. Lieutenant" had to go. A few minutes' canter brought me up with the others.

It was already getting dark when we left the village which had sheltered us for eight days. We resumed the fearsome routine of night marches on bad, narrow, muddy roads, climbing up hills and dropping into quagmires, occasionally diversified by a crazy foot-bridge. We marched in single file, and it grew so dark and the road so bad that we gave up trying to pick our way and stamped on solidly up to our knees in mud. All we knew was that we were on the heels of the Russians, and each man wondered whether he would come back alive. After about six hours' marching we reached an abandoned village and found eight houses to accommodate the whole battalion. To my company were assigned two cottages on a hill which could only be climbed on all-fours.

Wearied and soaked with rain and mud, we entered a room, filthy and evil-smelling even for Galicia. The orderlies swept it out and put straw down on the floor. We lit a fire, but put it out at once, for, as the house was not provided with the usual hole in the roof, the smoke filled the place and then made its way out through the door. Hunger was assuaged with eggs, bacon and tea, and we lay down to sleep in the straw. A number of

rabbits in a box by our heads fidgeted and squealed, and I spent a bad night. It was extremely cold, my cough was more troublesome than ever, and it required a supreme effort of will to resist the temptation to slip away over the frontier, which Victor, with meaning glances, indicated to be temptingly near.

*October 4th.*

We left at nine o'clock and started climbing steadily by something between tracks and roads. Fine rain was falling ceaselessly, and a mist floated over the surface of the ground. The cold and damp made us huddle together like hedgehogs, and we marched on in grim silence. We stopped above the village of Lopienka and immediately made for the shelter of the woods, from which the smoke of our fires was soon rising. It was getting on for midday and the men were just about to cook some potatoes for their meal, when an order came to put out all fires at once. I couldn't bring myself to insist on the literal fulfilment of this command, and merely turned a blind eye when the men compromised by concealing them.

Just as we were leaving we received a communication from our General (which we duly announced to the men) to the effect that the Russians were retiring in disorder

and it was our business to break their last resistance ; after which we should return home in triumph. A feeble “ Hurrah ! ” disturbed the peace of the valley, while within we repressed a deep sigh, for the word “ home ” made us tremble with emotion. What was happening in Ardéal ? How happy they ought to be down there, with a roof to their heads and a fire to warm themselves !

We marched farther, and at length dropped into a village, where the Ruthenian peasants gaped at us as if they had never seen our uniforms before. A Jew complained of looting, but no one would listen to him, for we were far too busy in avoiding the mud which glued our legs to the ground. On we went. A great forest, with its autumn foliage stirred by the wind, seemed to chant to us a dirge for the dead and sprinkle holy water from its weeping boughs. We drove on, ever more wearily, and became somewhat scattered, while some of the men actually fell out as their physical strength failed. After thirteen hours’ marching, we halted on the outskirts of the village of Bereznica and waited for our stragglers. There was nothing but the mud to rest in, but when the Major had turned out fifty men of all arms who had made themselves at home in the houses, we went off to discover quarters at the other end of the village. Forgetful of food, we dropped into a bed of straw in handy barns and slept as best we could.

Far away the guns were rumbling, and before long we were marching hysterically in the direction of the sound.

*October 5th.*

This morning we presented such a ludicrous spectacle in our panoply of mud that we all involuntarily burst out laughing. We didn't even make the slightest effort to clean ourselves up, for in an hour's time we should be swimming in another ocean of it.

I inspected the neighbourhood in hopes of finding some house where we could get tea made, but they were all a good distance off. We were on an estate which had once belonged to some boyar, but had been broken up among peasant proprietors. It consisted of barns, stables and a factory, but of course they were all abandoned now.

The sound of the cannonade was now even clearer, thanks to the mist and rain, and came from the north in the direction of the San, which was not far off. We were without orders or information of any kind, so we lolled at our ease around a fire which was the masterpiece of Victor, my orderly, and were ultimately joined by several other officers, including the Major. The gentle warmth was most grateful.

At eleven we left for Wola-Matyaszowa. We fell in at full strength, except for a small number of invalids

left behind at Bereznica after yesterday's march. At Wola, a Ruthenian told some of our Hussars, in Hungarian, that two days earlier Cossacks had been seen in the district. As we left the village, we accordingly disposed ourselves as for action. The mud was perfectly fearful. It formed rivers of pitch on the roads, and made the slopes as slippery as a snowslide. Slowly and toilsomely we ascended the hill opposite the village, and when we reached the top we were greeted by a storm of rain mingled with pellets of hard snow, which pricked the face like needle-points.

The men crouched under bushes while waiting for the laggards to catch up. The wood was young here, but a little farther on we came across thick bush, where progress was difficult. About four in the afternoon we reached the heights of Bania and Berezka. The sound of firing could be heard in the distance. A bitter autumn wind pierced us to the marrow.

We sent out strong patrols towards Bereznica, while we ourselves occupied the crests, and our reserves withdrew to the shelter of the wood, where they lit robbers' fires. At nightfall a peasant led us through the woods, while the moon shone splendid and serene and silence could almost be felt. Mist floated round us like a wan spirit, and the forest shrouded the soul of mystery. I did not let our guide out of my sight for an instant. Patrols whom we met told us that the Russians had



crossed the San that afternoon in boats. We halted outside the village, suspicious of traps, for we were dealing with a cunning foe, but further news passed down from the patrols reassured us. A house occupied by two Russian women with some young children seemed a good billet, and we duly installed ourselves there. I established half of my company in a house on the hill over towards the San, posted sentries, and warned them strongly that there was danger about.

That evening I did myself well. Victor made a huge quantity of rennet—a miracle of the cuisine—of which I put away an entire dishful, to the great horror of friend Weindl. We were then able to undress at leisure and sleep the sleep of the just on our warm straw. The men, too, found something to eat and comfortable barns for sleeping quarters.

*October 6th.*

There was an alarm at two o'clock this morning. My battalion was ordered to hold the village of Zwierzyn, in the bend of the San. We climbed Hill 650 through a thick wood, where the scrub was very dense and each step meant a fierce struggle with brambles and branches. The hill was also very steep, and we had to advance in single file, so our strength was taxed to the uttermost when we got to the top panting and breathless. We then experienced considerable difficulty in taking our

bearings, but finally, with the assistance of the moonlight through the trees, discovered the shining waters of the San like a great glistening serpent below us to the left. Every man among us was moved by this glorious night of Nature's symphony, yet the few minutes' halt required to reorganise the battalion were quite enough to set us all coughing and shivering. With the first streaks of dawn we reached the hill above Zwierzyn, and immediately deployed in open order as if in contact with the enemy. One company held the village, while mine was posted on the steep, tree-shaded bank of the river. Another company took station on our right, while the fourth was in reserve.

The mist floated on the water like an immense spider's web, while the timid autumn sun peered out above the tree-tops, heralding a fine day. Some of our lynx-eyed men had already discovered Russian vedettes passing through the wood and obviously thinking themselves secured by the mist against hostile observation. In a clearing just opposite us, a horseman, motionless on his mount and gazing intently in every direction, looked more like a statue than a thing of flesh and blood. As the light grew stronger and the mist evaporated, patrols of Cossacks began to swarm in all quarters. Six Cossacks with an officer at their head suddenly appeared on the road just ahead and for the first time I had a close view—they were not a thousand paces away—of a living

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armed Russian, for in the fighting of September 9th and 11th I had not so much as seen a Russian soldier's shadow.

I had always had a curious ambition to return from the wars with a Cossack horse, and here was my opportunity. These seven scouts must be captured! I told the men to take cover and not fire until the order was given. They were a quick-witted lot, and I knew I could rely on them absolutely. The Cossacks drew nearer—until they were within five or six hundred paces. I cast envious eyes on the mount of the leading Russian, a fine little beast. I was trembling with joyous excitement. Suddenly the patrol stopped. The officer sent a man in the direction of the only house on their side of the river. After a short time he returned with a peasant, whom I could have strangled if that were the only means of making him hold his tongue. But he gave us away. I saw the officer plainly indicate with his hand the position we were occupying. He took out his glass and examined it carefully, then turned round. It was all over, and I was to be done out of my Cossack horse. My friend Luther could contain himself no longer and fired. In the twinkling of an eye the Cossacks swept round and, crouching on the necks of their horses, streamed away like the wind. I had them all at the end of my rifle and fired too, while the men immediately followed suit, but not one Cossack fell from his saddle . . . they

were gone like a flock of birds. . . . What a nuisance ! We had wasted our cartridges and given away our positions. Those clumsy Territorials once again !

The sun rose in his red glory, set heaven and earth on fire, and chased the last swaying fog banks from the valleys. The San appeared, rolling his swelling waters as if he knew that his mission was to keep two contending hosts at arm's-length. The wood trembled under the penetrating warmth of the sun's rays. . . . There are few things in Nature more beautiful than a radiant autumn morning. An occasional sotnia of Cossacks galloped along the Orelec road as if it had suddenly emerged from underground. Mounted on white horses, they swept on like a whirlwind, and when two were hit and fell from their saddles, their comrades caught them up without stopping and carried them away to safety. They seemed to me like the archangels of legend, strong and glorious.

The Russian cavalry then dismounted and opened fire on us from a hill between Zwierzyn and Uherce. The distance was great—more than 2,000 yards—so they could not possibly reach us, and we did not even trouble to reply.

Shortly after these skirmishes a strong young Ruthenian peasant swam the San from the Russian side. We arrested him as a spy, but he told us he was a Ruthenian gendarme in the Austrian service, and produced from

the depths of his sleeve a permit of the proper kind authorised by the military authorities. He added that he had come from Lisko and Oslavitza, where he had seen Cossacks and Russian artillery. We released him after a few hours, but took good care that he heard and saw nothing. We had already got to the stage of suspecting everyone.

The inhabitants seemed genuinely pleased to see us, for they freely gave the men the small stock of food they possessed, and they laughed loudly at the story of the Cossacks bolting from danger. Yet they had no complaints to make against the Russians. They told us that Russians had slept in the village two days before, but had only asked for food, as we did.

At ten o'clock we received orders to cross the San. It took four Ruthenian peasants two hours to get us across in three primitive boats hollowed out of tree-trunks. Only fifteen men could cross at a time, so the wretched Ruthenians had to make thirty trips. It was hard work, too, for the slightest movement would have capsized the boat. The men, famished, and perhaps a little light-headed, hustled each other in fear of a cold douche, and in spite of all our care and the most stringent orders we had one case of shipwreck. Fortunately, it was quite close to the bank, or there would certainly have been a fatality, as the men were heavily laden with their packs and bandoliers.

The San was really our Styx, and the Ruthenian boatmen a set of Charons ferrying us across to the Slav Hades. As soon as its great waters ceased to separate us from the enemy, we were overwhelmed with a sense of depression, a kind of melancholy of death. How many of us would ever get back? . . .

The order to advance broke in upon our black musings. A series of heights, clothed in a mantle of oaks and firs, had to be occupied. Hunger proved a great spur to action, for we had not seen our cookers for three days and the men's mess-tins were empty one and all. Nothing or next to nothing, could be got from the villagers: "*Niéma, niéma,*" was the invariable reply which almost drove us to distraction. "I tell you what, sir," said Victor, "you can fairly hear the hunger in the men's throats," and I could well believe it, for my own pack contained nothing but a piece of bread and some tinned remnants.

But God would not abandon us even in this crisis. Just at the edge of the wood we found three farmers, each with a blessed potato plot in the hill. Within half an hour the nearest had been completely cleared of its crop of tubers and in a trice fires were crackling merrily and pots humming vigorously. In such circumstances, potatoes, boiled or fired, were food for kings. . . . Some pots, indeed, contained fowl, some wretched creature hastily slain and plucked. As the men said, "these

birds have welcomed the Russians and therefore richly deserve their fate," and the joke, feeble as it was, was good enough to put them in high good humour.

It was already too late to occupy the positions indicated, and fresh orders arrived that we were to march to Orelec. These, in turn, were countermanded, and we were instructed to retire and stop in a village until nightfall. The weather changed suddenly and heavy rain began to fall. We lost no time in piling arms in the filthy, smoke-ridden hovels, and I was lucky in finding one which boasted a lamp, by the light of which these notes were written. The storm increased and drove everyone to shelter. Those who could not find room below, took refuge in the loft and crouched under the roof, while a few marauding spirits forcibly invaded the cellars and cleared out everything eatable. The tumult gradually became unbearable as the men crowded round the roaring fires and the wind howled lustily outside. The host of my house took refuge with his family behind the stove, and we could see their eyes twinkling with fright and hear them muttering "*Bojé moia, Bojé moia*" — "Oh Lord! Oh Lord!"

The smoke and stench of all this soaked humanity, crowded into a narrow space, ought to have given us a splitting headache, and yet it was plain that our senses had been dulled by campaigning. The Major was at length compelled to turn out all the intruders, for we

really began to fear that the whole place would shortly collapse.

I lay on a bench and tried to sleep, or rather lull myself to sub-consciousness. The human mind is a curious thing. Just at the time when one's whole efforts are concentrated on the preservation of one's existence, a tormented existence though it be, from the depths there surge up strange emotions which increase the torment and add mental suffering to physical pain. The business of man-hunting which had occupied my whole morning seemed to me monstrous and nauseating. What on earth is the good of an education which one can throw off so easily and which cannot prevent a man from lying in wait for his fellow-man, laughing to see him go into danger and revelling in the prospect of hurling him into eternity? How near we all are to the Stone Age! The rifle is only the trade-mark of the twentieth century. Culture! A ridiculous, senseless word! You think yourself a man; you have lived all your life among books, studied literature and philosophy, speculated on the nature of Beauty and Goodness, waxed enthusiastic over the ideal of Humanity—and you leave them, to kill men like yourselves! You find genuine pleasure in firing on poor Cossacks! What's the good of talking about Culture? What about conscience and remorse? Oh yes, of course you are conscience-stricken and remorseful, but it does not prevent you being miserable if you



miss your man and let your enemy go safe and sound, if only because the next day, or the day after, *he* won't miss you ! What moral considerations govern this question of self-preservation ? Culture, Conscience, Morality, and all the rest of it are mere words, lying words, ceremonial expressions, under cover of which primitive man proclaims himself (and genuinely thinks himself) civilised, educated, good, just, and so on. . . .

During the night we received orders to move on, but it was only with the greatest difficulty that I got the men together in the pitch darkness. At the foot of a tree I dimly discerned a confused heap from which snoring proceeded. It was some of my men who had been sleeping out for six hours in the rain. . . . What admirable products of the " Age of Culture " !

Once more we had a civilian for our guide while we slithered and floundered in the slimy clay of many a trackless hill. We reached Orelec, a sea of mud, at half-past twelve, billeted our men, and then spied an inn with the panels of its door smashed in, showing that Cossacks had been looting. We did some more smashing, and a slender person like myself had no difficulty in getting through the gaps, but the door had to be ceremoniously opened for a great giant like Weindl. We soon had a roaring fire going in a room next to the kitchen, the fuel being the thin and greasy leaves of a Talmud which the Jewish owner had left behind. It did not

take us long to swallow what remained of our provisions, some fine tea—innocent of sugar or rum—warmed us up, and we slept on our straw beds as happy as urchins from two to eight.

*October 7th.*

A day of rest and decent food. The details that I have noted down here so carefully seemed much more important to us than any great European event, but I had no doubt that I should be amazed at my passion for trifles later on.

We bought a sucking-pig, laid him out beautifully in a pan, and thrust him into the oven, next to a fire stoked with perfect art. The Jew's dwelling-place contained nothing but broken furniture, Hebrew books with many missing leaves, and smashed casks. In a corner, however, we discovered a rickety chair and a little table which was almost intact, and in a chest of drawers the owner's collars and cuffs were peacefully lying. Apparently the Russians wanted these fripperies as little as we did.

We went down to the cellar with thoughts of liquid refreshment, but the casks gave forth a mighty hollow sound. Their bass voices, too, echoed far and wide: "*N-i-é-m-a.*" We knocked on the walls and dug up the floor in the hope of discovering the Jew's hidden hoard, but without success, to our intense dismay. We then

went back to our sucking-pig, which was beginning to turn golden-brown and give forth a delicious odour. We extracted some curds out of an old woman, a bleary-eyed hag like a South Sea idol, who shrieked out that we had broken her crockery, meaning thereby a collection of cracked earthenware pots held together with wire. I am afraid we had to turn her out before we could get rid of her.

What a riotous time we had ! Our field cookers turned up, and as it was now Wednesday and we had not seen them since Saturday, they received an appropriate welcome. No one bothered his head about the Russians. We didn't care a hang where they were or what they were doing. We were supposed to be pursuing them, but thought no more about it. We told ourselves they would never be such fools as to stop, but would do what we did from Mikolajow to the Carpathians—run for all we were worth. The men could think of nothing but food : their whole being cried aloud for food.

At the very moment, ten in the morning, that our cooker entered the inn yard, the alarm was given. A chorus of groans and protests ! Fortunately, the ovens contained some warmed-up meat, and the men fairly made for it. Within five minutes everyone had extracted something—and several more than something—and stocked his mess-tin. Then off we went, up to our knees in mud.

We heard that the imbecile Russians had turned to

attack us ; but, God be praised, the news turned out to be false, and we tramped peacefully back to our comfortable quarters. The spirit of evil in question was a second-lieutenant who had seen a Cossack patrol and told our staff that the Russians were turning our flank. This fine fellow was a Hungarian from Debreczyn.

We had hardly settled down again in the inn before a High and Mighty Staff Officer appeared on the scene and invited us to move off and take up any other quarters we liked. I began to plead and protest, but Lieutenant-Colonel Voicu, of the 1st Battalion, stopped me with his "*Befehl*" ("Orders"), and added that the Brigadier had done the same to them a few days before, and we must take our turn. "Certainly, by all means," I said to myself, "but you don't get our roast pork"; and I then and there carried off the dish on which some appetising fragments were still sizzling, and when I saw envious eyes and noses turned towards our masterpiece, I made off at top speed without waiting for any other *Befehl*.

We took refuge in a house near by, and the Major came along to help us finish our dinner. Roast duck and potatoes, sucking-pig, fruit salad and wine ; what could man desire more ! The men, too, had bread, biscuits, tinned meat, tobacco and wine, and the distribution of these good things suddenly increased the strength of my company by thirty—who vanished immediately afterwards like rabbits into a burrow.

So everyone was satisfied until, sleepy and replete, anxiety for our precious carcasses once more resumed its domination of our minds. The proximity of the Russians became unnerving, as before. We hadn't given them a thought while our insides were empty, except to feel like swallowing them whole if they attacked us, but *now* they seemed more numerous and alarming than ever. . . .

Towards evening, the Major came to explain the situation. The Seventh Corps was pursuing the Russians in the north-west and had already occupied Hill 491 and the angle of the Olsanitsa road. The Fourth Corps was advancing on the south in such a way as to attack the enemy from two sides at once, while we in the middle formed the connecting link between those two wings. We listened intently, taking our wine. It seemed an excellent plan . . . if the Russians didn't interfere.

This was quite a red-letter day for Weindl and me, as we received parcels from home. One was from good M. Jon Banciu, the Treasurer of our Association, and contained warm clothing, 500 cigarettes—a real god-send!—and some preserved fruits. God bless your kind heart, good Banciu. These welcome gifts made us as pleased as children. We gaped at them, touched them, turned them over as if they had been living things which had passed through many experiences and could tell us all about them. Had they not come from Ardéal?

We whiled away the evening with wine, tea, endless conversation and pleasant memories of our great feast. The Russians were once more completely forgotten. The joy of the moment was our sole concern, and I, who had preached that philosophy so often, was amazed to find myself held so wholly in its silken and ephemeral toils. Dr. George Măcelar joined us with a bottle of wine in each pocket.

We talked of all men and all things, and especially of the inhabitants of the russophile districts. It appeared that we had hanged eight individuals at Myckowcze, as it was alleged that the whole village had gone out to meet the Russians. At Orelec, too, the peasants had cast no favourable eye upon us, but had grumbled openly and refused to give us anything we wanted.

*October 8th.*

We learned that at Ustrzyckzi (where I slept so royally and can still see the fine eyes of the young Jewess) the Russians were in force, not less than a division of cavalry and artillery, and that Cossack patrols had been seen at Ustyanova. We started off for Hill 762, to the south-east of Holica. The sound of an artillery and rifle duel could be heard plainly on our left, between Stef-Kowa and Ustyanova, and we marched on light-heartedly. When we reached the village of Stef-Kowa I could actually

see the flashes of the guns, but in the mist it was impossible to see what they were firing at. Two shells suddenly burst five or six hundred paces away from us. It was maddening to know nothing of what was happening. I was told that the 24th Territorials were advancing on our left, but could see nothing of them.

I took the necessary precautions to prevent walking into a trap, and in a short time orders came to withdraw and take up positions on the heights above Orelec.

The whole brigade was to rest for the day. We could not help smiling at the muddle-headedness of the Staff, but we whistled merrily, for at least the new order meant quiet billets. Unfortunately, the rain began to fall, and continued without stopping until evening, so all the officers took refuge in the house of a Jew, who had a sick mother-in-law lying wrapped in furs. The men were given a ration of bread and brandy.

The Ruthenians are distinguished for their ability to complain over the least trifle. Thus a peasant (who might well have been one of Tolstoy's moujiks), speaking like an actor and bowing low every time he opened his mouth, swore that he had had his house looted—yet he had a pair of our army boots on his feet. The Jew whined that he had had a pair of boots stolen and demanded twenty crowns for them. I made strict investigation in my company, but could find no signs of them. The Mayor, a sturdy Ruthenian, was very downcast. When I wanted

to billet a platoon in the loft of his house, his three daughters, a caricature of the Graces, began to weep and wail as if they had suddenly been smitten with madness. They had hidden all their belongings there!

Blessed Ruthenians! These good folk stole two horses from us during the night. But we got square with them all right.

That evening, for the ninetieth time, we received some strict orders on the subject of discipline. Anyone dropping behind was to be shot or hanged, and the same penalty was to be meted out to those shamming illness. It had been ascertained—so ran the Order—that out of two thousand so-called cholera cases only 20 per cent. were genuine. What a fine state our army must be in, we thought!

*October 9th.*

We left the hills for Ustyanova at half-past seven. The weather was horrible, the rain being mixed with sleet driven by a sharp wind reminiscent of February. The regiment was practically up to strength. We were glad to have an opportunity of seeing some of our friends again, for these meetings are few and far between. One company of the Deva Battalion emerged from the church. The men were diligently crossing themselves, to wash their souls clean of the sin of having desecrated



the Lord's House with their presence for a whole night. But what else could they have done, as there was nowhere else to go ?

We proved here what a practical lot of men we were. The company shoemakers mended at least thirty pairs of boots, but there were an equal number which had been reduced to rags. Some of the men of an inventive turn of mind repaired the worst ravages with strips of hide found in cottages, while others made themselves leggings out of sacks, and one man made himself "opinci," sandals of raw hide attached to his boots. The men complained freely of wholesale theft. Hunger and misery take no count of rights of property, and for the first time I realised the naked truth of Proudhon's comment: "Property is theft."

Food and tobacco are the soldier's greatest treasures, and the thieves made a dead set at these. Meat and bread vanished with extreme rapidity, and as for tobacco, a private told me that you couldn't guard it even with your rifle and bayonet. Nor was personal linen exempt from these unpleasant attentions. The long and short of it was that no man cared for anything but his own existence and his own comfort. The sentiment of altruism, social solidarity and mutual aid was completely obliterated. I confess I got thoroughly sick of the men's petty quarrels and the childish tricks they played on each other. I tried the effect of a lecture on the subject,

but what I said merely went in one ear and out of the other. The inevitable "I" always came first.

The hills had fallen into a silent sleep. Before we reached Ustyanova we halted by the roadside, and an order came round that we were all to stick a sprig of fir on our caps. We did as we were told, wondering all the time what new vanity was this. . . . Then, seeing that we were on the road for Hungary, what could we do but think that it must be because the war was over and we were returning home. For one blissful moment we actually believed that we were about to quit this cursed country for good. The Roumanians began to sing aloud, and the startled woods, where the breath of death could almost be felt, rang to our music. But our Colonel told us that our new decoration was the symbol of a victorious army—and the singing ceased at once. We lit fires and cooked potatoes as if nothing had happened. Many a man angrily threw his "symbol of victory" into the flames.

The 21st Territorials turned up with their amiable and intelligent Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Spiess, ex-Chasseur. The appearance of this regiment of Cluj made us laugh until we cried. Most of the men had lost their caps and were arrayed in strips of tent-cloth, blankets, and anything else they had picked up in the course of their wanderings in Galicia. Some had women's blouses of every shape and hue, Jewish greatcoats with

full skirts, peasants' cloaks, and even sheepskins, while one hero had cut out the cloth of a billiard-table and fashioned it with buttons into a rough coat, within which his bones rattled with cold. The engineers had lost their rifles, and the only arms they had to pile were their entrenching tools. They looked like a regiment of ghosts, for their features were so drawn by cold and hunger as to be barely human.

They had had a very unhappy adventure. In an action near Halicz they had seen a number of Russians enter the firing line with nothing but their packs on their backs and apparently no weapon but their mess-tins. They had then thereupon asked their Commanding Officer if they could discard everything but their bandoliers with a view to freedom of movement. They had then received so severe a drubbing that they had fled precipitately, leaving all their equipment behind them.

We got on to the road again, but it was more a river of mud than a road. The inhabitants of this district received us well. The Jews, and especially the Jewesses, smiled at us openly and brought out all the food they had, with the result that there was a perfect stampede among the men, and nothing—not even the flat of a sword—could restore discipline for some time. I noticed that these charitable deputations were almost always headed by a Jew, and rather suspected that the members were not altogether free agents. They complained

bitterly that the Cossacks had looted them unmercifully, and spread a rumour that Austrian money no longer circulated in the country.

We did our best to play the part of liberators, and swaggered bravely through the slime. The men became more cheerful and marched really well, so that a General actually asked if they were Roumanians, and, on receiving an affirmative reply, gave them quite an affectionate look and dropped a remark which went straight to our hearts: "Na, natürlich, nur die Rumänen können so marschieren" ("I might have known only Roumanians could march like that").

We reached Ustrzyckzi by following the railway track, which is much preferable to roads for marching. Once in the place we lost no time in making ourselves at home in the houses, and found only women left. They brought out eggs, butter and cream, and cooked excellent potatoes for the men. We got the best reception here that Galicia ever gave us.

*October 10th.*

The weather was fearful, for a rain and snow storm lasted all night and it was so cold that we had to bring in our horses. I felt thoroughly ill, mentally and physically exhausted, and full of gloomy forebodings. I smoked without stopping, in an effort to lull myself into somnolence. I'm afraid a soldier is never happier than

when thus drugged, but it never occurred to me to go sick. I seemed driven on by a relentless destiny.

We left for Chyrow at six o'clock in the morning. The march was monotonous and most fatiguing, not less so on horseback than on foot. Cold, mud and wind were a distressing combination. After I had had half an hour on my horse and been frozen to the bone, I was only too ready to march in the ranks with the men, and more than grateful to meet with no objection.

We heard that the Russians were only a day's march away from us. Our gunners had let fly at them yesterday, and they had left some guns, two of them buried, on a hill. Was it because they intended to return?

At Starzava we bivouacked in the open fields, but potatoes were hard to find. With our permission, the men tore down and burnt for fuel the roof timbers in the house of the Jew who exacted 200 crowns for a cartload of hay and 1 crown 20 for a truss of straw during our retreat. This time his establishment was well looted. At Chyrow we were the guests of a Christian, who said he was a Pole. A little double-bedded room was put at our service, and a small girl of fourteen prepared it for us with obvious eagerness. Our guns had already opened fire on the Russians, and we confidently expected to spend a sleepless night. I undressed and went to bed early, and certainly could have found no more pleasant place. I had hardly been asleep two hours,

and it was only ten o'clock, when the alarm was given. There was a storm of oaths, but to no purpose, and we found ourselves on the same muddy road in the inky blackness. The town of Chyrow, it seems, was not for the likes of humble Territorials. The dirty little village of Polena was deemed suitable quarters for us. I here learned from some men who had lodged with a Jewish neighbour of my Pole that the evening before two Russians officers had stayed at his house and actually slept in my room. The Pole, they said, was a Ruthenian, and the wife and obliging daughter had refused their guests nothing, in return for a handful of roubles. By way of reward, the Russians had filled the house with all sorts of stores looted from the Jews by their men!

We entered this desert of a village, cursing the day we were born. The whole brigade was there, and all promising billets had been taken beforehand, so that my battalion had to bivouac under the stars. Even our Major, a self-possessed individual with a strong sense of duty, lost patience and stormed at this flagrant negligence. However, there was no help for it, and we resigned ourselves and lit fires; but the men were irritated and uncomfortable, and hardly slept all night. They spent most of the time stoking their fires, and before morning had burned all the railings in the neighbourhood, including the palisade of the cemetery. They assured me that if the night had lasted much longer they would have had

down even the rafters of the church. To get shelter of any kind the officers had to turn some men of the 21st out of a house, and among the ejected I noticed an old friend, Dr. Ciura, barrister of Abrud, whose hand I managed to shake in the darkness.

A woman was dying in this house. A Ruthenian peasant covered her with dirty wraps and gave her brandy in small sips from time to time. I'm afraid we left them little room, for there was little room to be left. The poor creature's groans made many of us think of death, though that was nothing new. After all, we should be in action to-morrow, and many would prefer a cold bed under the earth to a continuation of all the miseries we had lately endured.

LASZKI-MUROWANE  
BATTLE. THE TRENCHES. RETREAT

*October 11th.*

It was Sunday, and we got up early. The roar of the guns was our substitute for the pleasant symphony of church bells, and the rattling of machine-guns had to do duty for the *toaca*\*

We marched in column until we reached the neighbourhood of Berezew, where we found the 24th Territorials also in column of route. Here I found my good friend Bogdan. He asked me whether I had any copy for the "Transilvania."† "I'm afraid I have been unable to produce anything myself," he added. "I've been too busy." He offered me his brandy flask, and I took a strictly military draught. We shook hands and wished each other good health and good luck. It was the last time I ever saw that splendid soul, for he fell a few days later at Szumina, struck by a shell splinter.

A short distance farther on we opened out into action formation and advanced towards Szumina, to the right

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\* A board which is struck with a hammer—used in monasteries to summon the monks to prayers.

† The oldest Roumanian review in Hungary, jointly edited by these two gentlemen.



of the road. Shells dropped like hail, but fortunately no one was hit. Then we received orders to retire, and were assembled in a fir copse near the church of Berezew. Our own artillery was posted on some hills on the right bank of the river Sterwiaz. Shrapnel did not bother us much, as the branches gave us a certain amount of cover, but several stray high-explosives landed uncomfortably near, and smashed the trees like toys, causing us a few casualties. I saw some guns climbing a hill on a wretched, half-buried track, and an amazing sight it was. The six horses of each gun were straining with their backs arched, and the men tugged at the wheels until their eyes almost came out of their heads.

We slipped down to the bed of a stream, and, skirting the hill overlooking the Sterwiaz, made for Laszki-Murowane. On our right, rifle-fire never ceased, and to our left the Russian shells were watering the road to Felstyn and the village of Gradowice. Quite as many Russian as Austrian shells passed over our heads.

In the village a Ruthenian told me that the Russians were treating the peasants very well, and promising that the Czar would divide up among them the estates of the Polish boyars and provide agricultural machinery for their better working.

About two in the afternoon we reached the river bank, just below the château of Laszki-Murowane, though we could not see it. We were told that the Fourth Corps was

attacking on our right, and, indeed, we could hear an engagement proceeding in the direction of Stari-Sambor ; while on our left, where the Seventh Corps was supposed to be advancing, silence reigned supreme and nothing could be seen. Where exactly were the Russians ? No one knew. I got up into the attic of a house and searched the landscape through the rafters. Away at the bottom of the valley was a group of houses, and lo ! some Russians proceeding along the river bank in our direction. I immediately gave instructions to my 4th platoon and we started firing without waiting for orders or telling the others. Major Hettinger appeared on the scene with a " Well, Tăslăuanu, what are you firing at ? "

" The Russians, sir ! "

" Oh ! . . . Where are they ? "

I showed him. One of them had just fallen, undoubtedly hit, though the distance was anything up to a thousand yards. My decision evidently pleased the Major, for he appears to have said of me : " Az ügyes ember " (" There's a fellow with his wits about him "). I felt quite proud to have been the first to find the enemy.

During the night a half-company remained in the firing trenches while the other half rested in the house on which we had fired. The men were almost mad with hunger, as they had had nothing to eat all day, and on the way had actually tried to get hold of raw cabbages and turnips. I had had to stop them ruthlessly for fear of

cholera, though it seemed brutal to do so. They now dug up potatoes with their bayonets and swarmed noisily round our fires, though Russian patrols might easily have been within earshot. Even the sentries left their posts in order to secure their share of the spoils, so that in the end I was forced to use the harshest means to maintain discipline. It was imperative to guard against surprise. Besides, no quarter is given at night, and most of these men had left children behind them.

We officers found moderately snug quarters, made some tea, and went to bed late, not expecting sleep, unless perhaps the last sleep. On the hill between Laszki-Murowane and Zazadki, about six hundred yards apart, ran the opposing lines of trenches, the Russian position skirting the edge of a wood, and the ceaseless rattle of rifle-fire kept us on tenterhooks all night. What was in store for us to-morrow? That little word *to-morrow* has a terrible meaning on active service. It seems to stand for the slow passage of Eternity, each hour as long as a year in other, happier days.

*October 12th.*

Since daybreak there was violent firing in all directions. We sent out at least two thousand rounds from our farm, but with what result we could not say. Our object was the same as yesterday. The Russians kept coming out of their trenches and going to some houses near by,

probably to get food and warmth, like ourselves, for no doubt they were not less sensitive to the cold and rain than we were. Perched on the river bank were a house and shanty and a little lower down two or three other houses, one being a specially fine one which we couldn't help grudging the enemy. So the whole morning we did not give them a minute's peace, what with systematic volleys and the harassing fire of snipers. The willows by the river bank gave us some sort of cover, so that it was difficult for them to get our direction.

About midday a violent cannonade began and we found once more that we were not yet accustomed to this ultra-modern music. The shells burst all round us and I believe our house was the only one that was not hit. Of course we shammed annihilation and came out quickly, but the Russians then fired straight into our trench, and human fragments and pieces of clothing were soon mingled with the stones, dust and iron shards. The wholesale horror of war impressed me as never before, but this sensation was modified by humorous indignation at seeing our artillery reply by firing into the brown, the exact position of the Russians being unknown. I borrowed Stoica's glasses and went back to the top of the barn to spy out the land. To the north of the village of Slochrujia a detachment of our troops could be distinguished in the corner of a wood just below the crest. Facing them, farther on, were the Russian

lines, and the Russian artillery was obviously posted at the edge of a wood on the Węgrzeliska hill. I could also see two officers near by who could only be observers. We learned later that the Russian gunners took women about with them, while the officers had a thoroughly good time. They could afford not to worry about our shells seeing that the range of our guns was only three miles while theirs was four or five.

I could see nothing of the village of Felstyn, but thought it must be unoccupied, and it occurred to me that it would be good policy to push along the river bank and drive the Russians off the hill. I had hardly finished my survey before I received orders to cross the river and advance as far as I could. We went over one by one, concealing ourselves as much as possible under the willows and osiers on the farther bank. Here were two houses. We advanced another 800 paces and found ourselves in an open meadow with another house and on its left a line of willows going from the river to the village of Felstyn. We had borrowed the idea of single file from the Russians. Unfortunately they saw us and opened fire. As Victor whispered in my ear: "the leaves of the willows flutter in the tempest of bullets." In spite of this only two or three men were wounded, though one of these was hit in the spine and lost all movement in the legs.

The occupants of the two houses on the bank had meanwhile taken refuge behind the stove. Nor was

this to be wondered at seeing that in one case the whole fireplace had been carried away by a shell, while the windows were utterly shattered.

A Ruthenian gave me some milk and eggs and an unexpectedly friendly look. I suppose I must have looked quite exhausted after my strenuous efforts, vocal and otherwise, to get the men to advance carefully and without exposing themselves unduly. Other companies of my battalion had tried to debouch behind us, but without success. As soon as a man showed himself two or three shells burst almost on top of him, and the Russians seemed to have no lack of ammunition. By the evening I had only a handful of men left by the willows to my right. I went up to show them their positions, and sent a runner to the Major to tell him how far we had got and to get fresh orders. Suddenly heavy fire was opened on us from behind, causing fearful confusion and eight casualties in as many seconds. As this firing continued I summoned up all my courage and ran at top speed to the bridge shouting: "Feuer eistellen—tüzet szüntess!" ("Cease fire!"). The Russians, hearing the second fusillade, immediately fired again at us.

This was the last straw. I threw myself flat into the marshes, yelled, blew my whistle and swore wholesale at Austro-Hungarian stupidity. It was quite a quarter of an hour before the situation was restored. In a fearsome rage I went up to the Major, who was with the rest of the

regimental Staff in a brick house on the other bank, and asked him what was the idea of firing into us from behind. They then told me that a certain platoon of a Hungarian regiment had nearly massacred them too! I made my report and they were extremely astonished to hear we had got as far as we had, and gave me orders to remain in our positions all night so as to cover the advance of some troops on our right. I suggested that it was risky to be without reserves, and they promised me the 12th Company, Luther's. With my anxieties by no means dissipated I went back to my men, rallied those who had scattered; and disposed them on the two fronts: one facing Felstyn, where I did not know what was happening; and the other the Russian trenches, which were familiar enough. My poor fellows were utterly famished, the ground was wet, the night cold, and there was no enthusiasm to occupy the front line, though there was no help for it. Trenches had to be dug and we made them as warm as we could with straw. Then, without another thought for the Russians, the men went to sleep.

I wanted to send out a patrol towards Felstyn, but I could not find three men capable of such mission. There were three officers: Weindl of the 1st Platoon, Dejenariu of the 10th Company (he had managed to bring a dozen men up to this exposed spot), and myself, and we decided to keep watch in turn. Mine came round at two o'clock in the morning and up to that hour I had had barely

two hours' sleep, thanks to the piercing cold. I sent Weindl to snatch some sleep and started on my round of inspection. The men were asleep and I did not disturb them except those whose loud snoring might have given us away to the enemy. At three o'clock I received the following order :

*" I Bon I R 23 and II 23 np. f. zlj. Will now advance on the yellow house. III 23 will remain in its position to cover them. The yellow house must on no account be fired on.—Hettinger, Major."*

Before that moment I had never so much as thought of this "yellow house." Which was it ? Where was it ?

I went round our house several times in the darkness, but found all the doors and windows fastened. When I had forced a window off its hinges I got in and woke up Victor and Murarescu. We stuffed up every conceivable opening and then lit a fire, which did something towards thawing us, while some hot tea did a lot more.

As soon as it grew light we roused the whole company, gave each man his position and posted nine men in the loft. Nor did we stop until all our preparations for defence were complete.

It had been a horrible night and I am not likely to forget the expenditure of nervous energy it had involved. It was not exactly that I experienced fear, but rather an overwhelming sense of responsibility. I couldn't help thinking of all the fathers of families under my orders.



Besides, suppose we had been surprised, annihilated ? . . . I felt glad that an opportunity had been presented to us Roumanians to show the "foreigners" what we could do and how we could distinguish ourselves even in *their* war.

*October 13th.*

These have been the worst days of the campaign and no language of mine could do justice to the full horror of them. I shall attempt a description, but it can necessarily be but a framework, a skeleton.

The 23rd Territorials had debouched in the valley of the Sterwiaz. On our right, near Starasol, the other regiments of Ardéal Territorials were in line with the Fourth Corps. On our left we had another Corps and a Division, although only small detachments of these were visible.

Our 103rd Brigade was commanded by General Heuner, a feeble individual, who was under the thumb of his aide-de-camp, Captain Homolya, a sinister and ambitious mediocrity. It seemed clear to us that this man was bent on our extermination. At least that seemed the only possible explanation of the orders he gave, for it takes a knave, rather than a fool, to think that victories can be won with third-line troops who are neither armed nor equipped as the necessities of modern warfare require.

The one thing certain was that the brunt of the work was always thrown on us, and we, who could not see beyond

our own noses and naturally knew nothing of the general situation, were lulled into the belief that hitherto the war, for us, had been merely an affair of excursions and alarums. . . . But now there was no mistaking the fact that the enemy "detachments covering a retreat" were neither more nor less than a formidable force holding several lines of trenches and determined to hold up the pursuit.

There was no time to be wasted in mutual recrimination for as soon as the mist lifted fire was opened on us, at first sleepy and tentative because visibility was not too good.

When it grew light, I made an effort to survey our position. It was only mediocre and I was sorry I had not called in the Engineers to help in making trenches. The centre of it was a house situated in an open meadow. It had an outbuilding, the door of which was blocked up by planks, a feeble defence. I divided the men into parties, of which one was duly posted in the loft. The house was built of heavy timber and had a roofing of thatch. It was evidently new; in fact, unfinished. We blocked up the door and window on the Russians' side with laths, planks, logs and bricks, to give some cover against rifle fire. A window on the reverse side served for an exit in case of necessity, being large enough to admit a body reduced to slender proportions by underfeeding. Of course, poor Weindl could not get through, and we

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extracted a good deal of amusement out of his efforts. His mother evidently intended him for the Imperial Guard.

In a short time we had "fortified" our house after a fashion. My two orderlies had very varying experiences. Victor had the fright of his life when a spent bullet bored a hole through his cap. "That's a lucky one for you, Victor!"—"My word, sir, if we get away from here with nothing worse than a hole in our caps, I'll say mass for forty days running." Murarescu, by way of adding variety to our daily life, sat by the stove roasting potatoes and quietly reading the "Visions of the Holy Virgin."

When it got quite light I saw the Russians strolling about on a distant hill and presented them with a resounding volley by way of greeting. Some spirit of devilry prompted me, no doubt, but Victor was anything but pleased. "How vindictive you are, sir! The poor fellows are trying to get warm. I expect they're as cold as we are." However, we gave them another volley, but before the third was on its way the Russians had replied in kind. And such a reply! The bullets splattered against the walls and whistled through the thatch like a hailstorm. We soon lapsed into silence, but the enemy was obviously reluctant to forgo his revenge.

Losses, of course, we had. One man whom I had posted behind the door to keep watch through a crack received a bullet in the breast and fell, dying. We gave

him some bread and sausage, with rum to revive him, and my orderlies bandaged him. Weindl, walking behind the house, was hit in the thigh most unluckily, as apparently the shot was a stray one which ricocheted off the wall. Anyhow, the villainous little piece of lead had not enough force left to go right through the body. The Saxon giant sank down, then with a wrench got up again and staggered off. I watched him go wistfully, for alas! this catastrophe left me alone in the company. There he was, going back to Ardéal, blessed Ardéal, and I hadn't even time to ask him to kiss the soil of my native land for me.

I felt utterly exhausted and wretched. The groans of the wounded unnerved me and for the first time I felt myself marked down by Death. I waited calmly, resignedly, moment by moment, and smoked cigarettes without stopping. I could see myself kneeling piously at the altar of the wooden church of my native village, just as I had done in my childhood. With half-closed eyes, I stood while everything seemed to be revolving round me and we appeared to be ascending and floating in a clear blue sky. The whistling bullets became the legendary birds with beak of steel which beat on the doors of the celestial abode. Earth and sky sang hymns of praise with melodies such as I seemed to have heard sung by Slaviansky's Russian choir. Life fell away from me and I stood enraptured on the threshold of the Beyond.

I sat down near the open window with my head in my hands, enjoying the delights of eternal rest. A bullet went ping against the wall and a mirror broke into pieces, one of which cut open my left cheek. I gazed affectionately at this poor peasant's mirror, every fragment catching the light even in destruction. I collected the bits—all except the piece which had hit me in the face. Then I looked at myself in the glass and saw a being with a shivered soul, a phantom with a resemblance to myself.

I asked Dejenariu to take my place for a bit and left my observation-post, to throw myself on a sofa by the bullet-spattered wall for an hour's deep and welcome sleep.

On waking I made the round of the house and found quite a number of casualties, the wounds fortunately being mainly in the hands. It was my business to certify that they had actually been wounded in action, as otherwise the doctors behind the line would merely bandage them and send them back under suspicion of having inflicted their wounds themselves. With all my experience I could never look unconcernedly at the dead and wounded. Bad wounds in particular upset me horribly. While I was still at school in Blaj one of my unfortunate fellow-countrymen, boy though he was, threw himself in front of a train. On the day he was buried I caught a glimpse of his mangled corpse and fainted.

Now it was my duty to examine wounds, and I confess I experienced a certain gruesome curiosity in doing so. My gaze wandered over the broken fingers, dwelt on the rich red blood, the white fragments of bone buried in the torn flesh, and above all the triumphantly cheerful expression on the faces of the sufferers. Two of them confessed that their wounds were self-inflicted. I don't believe this confession would have been forthcoming if it had not been for their impelling agonies. A guilty man's conscience always seems to betray him. Those who had received their wounds from the Russians hardly complained at all, but were only too glad to be out of the war for a bit. But those who had injured themselves seemed unable to suppress their cries, and took no pleasure in their deliverance. I despised their cowardice, but sent them down with the rest, leaving it to God to brand them if he thought fit.

Facing us, but a little to the left, perhaps a hundred paces off, were a group of trees and some thick brushwood, which obstructed our view and caused me some misgiving. On one occasion I caught sight of two Russians vanishing as if into a trench. Two of my men, George Mandeau, of Upper Arpas, and Jon Anghel, of Vladeni, undertook to make a reconnaissance, and came back, having discovered a cart track which the Russians were using as a private highway to the village of Felstyn. I rewarded the enterprise of these two men with some tobacco, and for the

eyes of their children's children I set out their names in full here. It is the only decoration I can give them.

Just as I was writing these notes at a rickety table I received a fearful thump in the back, and looked round, to find a man had fallen from the loft almost on top of me. It was poor old Varsogea, a grave, silent peasant with more title to the description of philosopher than most of the breed. He had just been shot in the body, the bullet coming through the chink in the roof he had made by way of peephole. My orderlies picked him up and bandaged him and I found him food and something to drink and assured him he would get over it. We promised him to get some stretcher-bearers as soon as it got dark.

It so happened that two of our wounded came from the same village, Lower Sâmbata. They lay side by side under rough coverings on some straw in the corner of the stable, and mingled with their groans was a dust of common reminiscences of the village, their wives and children. I could not keep from tears.

"Sir! Sir!"

"What's the matter?" I recognised the voice of Zosim.

"Just look here, sir! . . ."

I could see my gypsy maimed and already regretted his flute-playing and merry wit.

He showed me his drum in ribbons and a keyed trumpet, which he had looted somewhere and kept carefully secreted

among his belongings, with a hole neatly bored through it. He surveyed them with such a crestfallen air that I burst out laughing.

"Well, Zosim! You ought to be grateful to have got off so lightly. You can kick your drum out of doors. It's done for, so far as we are concerned."

"Oh, I've felt the caress of death myself, sir. It climbed round my back and tried to burrow in my spine."

He took off his clothes and showed me the marks of a bullet which had grazed him.

"I don't care a hang about my back, sir, but it's real rough luck about the drum, and especially the trumpet. Then, to crown all, you'll give me a rifle now, sir, and I never could hold one, as you know."

He cut such a miserable figure that I took pity on him, gave him some cigarettes and promised him he should still be our drummer. A broad grin spread over his swarthy features.

The heavy fire lasted until four o'clock, when our own artillery joined in, and this time to such good effect that several shells burst right in the Russian trenches and two of their fortified houses were set on fire.

When the light began to fail I sent Private Fröhlich, a smart and energetic Saxon, to get ammunition, food (for the potato supply had given out), and the Major's latest orders. As a result the contents of the last convoy arrived, including rations in profusion for the whole



company. We were told to stay where we were and informed that the village of Felstyn was held by the Russians. I accordingly reinforced my front on that side and set the men to widen the trenches and dig new ones. It was easy to see that there would be hot work that evening or next morning. I sent for some pioneers to make a communication trench between us and our reserves, but they never turned up, and with that my last hope of salvation vanished.

When I woke at two in the morning all the sentries were at their posts. The men smelt danger in the air. Within a few minutes the following order arrived, which I read out by the light of a fire.

*“Our massed artillery will bombard the Starasol road all night. At daybreak the 23rd Regiment will open fire on the enemy. All the troops will maintain a sustained fire for a quarter of an hour. The trenches should be specially manned for this purpose. At eleven o'clock in the morning the operation will be repeated with the same intensity. At other times fire will be irregular but accurate.”*

I was right in thinking we had a stiff day before us.

I drank five cups of tea one after the other, and for the first and last time in the campaign knelt down before an ikon in the peasant's house and recited the prayers of my childhood with a fervour new and strange. It was not I the sceptic, who prayed; it was my ancestors praying

through me, the five generations of priests who prayed for their flock in our mountains.

Perhaps if I had had only myself to think of it would have been without regret, and even without prayer. But I had the care of all those fathers of families, and I could see all the children awaiting their return. I could not protect them . . . so I implored the assistance of One Who could.

*October 14th.*

When morning came two cans of hot coffee did something to revive the men, and after the freezing night they needed some reviving. Many of them reported sick and looked at me in wide-eyed astonishment when I informed them that the occupants of the firing line were of three classes: living, dead, and wounded. The Staff recognised no kind of illness as long as a man could stand up.

There was a thick fog, impenetrable at thirty yards, but, nevertheless, at the hour indicated a storm of fire burst forth, for it is the Austrian fashion to carry out orders meticulously to the letter. It was an absurd waste of ammunition, without rhyme or reason, and I was pretty certain the Staff had not foreseen the mist, and so kept my men on the leash until eight o'clock. Then, however, they blazed away like maniacs. I watched the proceedings from my window, but it was impossible

to ascertain the effect. The only thing I could see was a huge Russian ascending the hill opposite with the studied indifference of a man out for a constitutional. It was for *this* that we had made ourselves so terrible, and yet it was clear that the only object of the operation was to demoralise the enemy !

The most obvious result of our rolling volleys was to cause considerable alarm among a number of fowls sheltering in the neighbouring woods. Several took refuge in flight and came down to earth within fifty feet of our rifles, so that the adventurous Victor went forth and secured two for our mess.

About ten o'clock one of my men came up to ask permission to fetch some water for cooking. I felt inclined to refuse, although the firing was not so intense. He might be killed, or he might not, and anyhow, if he valued boiled potatoes more than his own skin, it was his affair. The poor fool, instead of hiding in the willows behind the house, went out straight into the open, and before we could call him back the Russians had him stretched on the ground. His cans flew out of his hands and he lay groaning : " Oh, my children, my poor children." He would have lain out there lamenting all day and it was only on orders from me that he made up his mind to try and move. " Drag yourself over here," I cried, and with much groaning and in spite of a severe wound in the thigh he got himself within arm's-length and we

pulled him in. We put him down on the floor of a barn alongside many others who had been wounded that morning, and he soon started them off until there was a perfect chorus of funeral lamentation. Persuasion and threats alike failed to reduce the clamour, which soon demoralised us all. It was hopeless to think of sending them down to the ambulance.

This incident will give some idea of the excellent marksmanship of the Russians. I had further proofs of it every time they noticed me at the window. The moment I put out my head to use my glasses two or three bullets invariably spattered against the frame. When Comanescu paid me a visit yesterday to tell me that he was in the 12th (Reserve) Company holding a line through the willows by the river, he leaned out of the window, though I told him of the risks he ran. He had just got his shoulders out when, flick! a bullet flew between his head and the pane and buried itself in the wall behind us. I picked it out and offered it to him jokingly for a souvenir, but he was pale as death.

In due course Victor came up to announce that the roast fowl "of superfine quality" was ready, and I found that the thoughtful fellow had even gone so far as to prepare a bowl of curds-and-whey. He well knew my weakness for that delicacy.

"I tell you what, Victor. If we get out of here alive, I shall put you up for the medal. . . ."

"If we get out..." he repeated in a musing and incredulous tone.

At eleven o'clock, according to orders, we opened heavy fire on the Russian positions. Once more we blazed away, giving no thought for the waste of ammunition. We were to pay heavily for this piece of folly. I soon realised that we still had a long day before us and decided to find out how many rounds each man had left. Most of them had only five or six; our ammunition boxes were empty and the patrol I sent to the Major for more never came back at all.

In its stead there appeared a deputation led by a Jew. I asked him what he wanted and to my amazement he offered himself as a volunteer to reconnoitre a line of trees ahead of us. I looked him up and down, for a brave and enterprising Jew was a new phenomenon to me.

"You really want to go?"

"Yes."

"How many children have you?"

I forget now what his answer was. Three or four, I believe, but to put him to the test I showed him how he could get unobserved to the trees, and promised that if he went first I would send out the others to find him. But he must report to me on his way back. He stood in thought a moment as if my reference to his family had made him change his mind. Then he went, and

I never saw him again. - But I know that he came back safe and sound with the three others, for I heard afterwards that in the Carpathian fighting he was ever at the post of danger. More than the ordinary Hebrew blood flowed in *his* veins.

About midday the Russian artillery suddenly went mad and a sky-rending bombardment began on the hill, and especially round the bend of the river, where the enemy obviously supposed our reserves were concentrated. The distant detonations, followed by an uncanny rumbling, and the final crash almost deafened us. The air was full of little puffs of smoke and great columns of earth and stones sent up by the explosions. These columns drew nearer and soon our trenches by the river were seriously damaged. From minute to minute we expected a shell on the roof of our house, though we had not replied for fear of giving away our positions. After a bit I went down to the trenches and sent out two more runners to ask for supports and ammunition. I told the men to be ready for any eventuality and keep a sharp look-out, but on no account to fire without a definite target.

My corporal, Cocos, hidden in the earth near the window, called to me :

“ That won’t do, sir ! ”

“ What is it, Cocos ? ”

“ Just look how the Russians are sneaking across that scrub down there.” I rushed to the window and saw in

a glance that the Russians were running towards the road, but I had scarcely shown my head at the window when a hail of bullets fell, guns and machine-guns firing at the same instant. There followed an hour and a-half of madness and horror.

For ten minutes I remained in the house, from which I could see at a glance the men in the loft, those in the trenches and the whole of the line stretching to the river. During a lull in the firing I glanced out of the window. The Russians had left their trenches and were advancing in disorder towards our 2nd Battalion. At that moment our men from the loft and trenches called out: "Here come the Russians, sir!" Their voices shook with fear, but at the same time they fired on the Russians from behind, above my right wing. I knew that we were short of ammunition and I gave the command not to fire without orders. I wanted to allow the enemy to get close. Again I sent a man with the order to bring back ammunition and to call up the 12th Company in reserve to our assistance.

The rain of shells began to slash the wall around me. A splinter of wood, torn from a beam, hit me in the chest. From the loft they told me that the Russians were advancing on us, and that they were now swarming in the valley. Two cowards came down from the loft to hide in the stable. I shouted at them. They were green with fright. "The Russian

are breaking through, sir.” The number of wounded increased; voices grew more urgent. “The Russians are here, sir! They will kill us! They will exterminate us!” I felt that I was on the verge of losing my authority and that the men were slipping away from me. I took my rifle and climbed out of a window at the back. The number of our wounded made me shiver. I commanded: “At them, men! Aim straight!” Those around me who heard me began a persistent and well-aimed firing. Others followed their example. The tumult grew. The Russians poured up the slope in hordes. They reached the scrub in front of us and stumbled about in it a good deal; but they came on, they came on! It was a deluge. . . .

Soldiers of our reserve joined us, terrified. They brought some cartridges *in their pockets*. A mere nothing. It was only by cursing them roundly that I could induce them to fill the gaps in the trenches and in the loft. “I have children, sir, spare me!” How many fathers and husbands fell before my eyes! I saw in a flash the mourning and misery in our Ardéal; the shattering of hopes and sentiments. I scarcely knew what to do. Pity for my Roumanian soldiers tore my heart, but my native pride obliged me to stand firm whatever happened.

The Russians had surrounded our 2nd Battalion and disarmed them. Behind us, my reserve had crossed the



river and taken refuge. My company remained alone. The bombardment continued without pause; machine-guns overwhelmed us. In the loft my men were nearly all killed; behind the house the wounded prayed for death, being continuously hit by fresh bullets. The soldiers who tried to escape from the trenches fell too. On all sides I heard; "Here come the Russians. We have no more bullets. Give us cartridges!"

I cursed the men around me who had left their posts, and threatened to shoot them if they did not come back. I pleaded with them: "No surrender for Roumanians. Hold firm! On them!" They began to fire again, emptying their last cartridges. Some men of our left wing, among them brave Corporal Misica, came to our help. Their attitude raised the morale of all. We killed and wounded a great number of Russians, and when they came face to face with us we obliged them to halt for a moment. That moment thrilled me with pride. I felt the old spirit of our race vibrate among us. I cried without ceasing: "Hold firm, men. No surrender!" I gave a signal for those by the riverside to advance. Not a soul moved. Vincent Pop, a fine, intelligent man, in whom I had great confidence, came down from the loft. He told me that up there all were dead and the Russians only a hundred and fifty paces away. Misica, the corporal, was wounded. The schoolmaster, Comsa, came to me and proposed that we should retire. We were lost.

Leaning against a beam which protected me from the bullets, I shut my eyes. I could think no more. The strain was such that I could only wait for the end. My friend Dejenariu came to me. He was very pale. I looked at him without seeing him. He asked :

“ Well, what are we going to do ? ”

I shrugged my shoulders in silence.

“ Do you know what ? We’ll have a drop.” And with a smile he held out his flask. This happy gesture revived us and I was able to decide what to do. We would not abandon our position, but we would have to capture the trench behind the house. The soldiers, seeing me separate myself from them, believed that a retreat had been ordered, and followed me. But, at the moment of entering the trench, a voice in the rear shouted “ Forward ! ” It was Vincent Pop, and his voice was so strong and convincing that I too cried out “ Forward ! ” and began to run through a hail of bullets towards the river. I had scarcely run a hundred steps when I was covered with perspiration. My throat went dry, my knees knocked together. I wanted to throw myself to the earth, but shells littered the ground. I walked on slowly ; there was nothing else to do. Bullets passed between my legs and round my head. I made not the least effort to avoid them. My mind was filled with all kinds of fancies. Each minute that passed was a lifetime. I walked on and on, my rifle in my hand, and I thought of a

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scene of my childhood days. Some foreigners had come to the village. The man stood his wife against a plank and threw knives at her, placing them all round her body. To-day, as then, emotion made me breathless. At fifty paces a shell exploded, tearing up the earth and covering me with dust. A piece of dirt entered my open mouth. I spat it out, and that awakened me. I was not wounded. I continued to advance. Two hundred paces from the river I saw some of our men. I signed to them. No one moved. I walked on for twenty steps and looked again. Not a soul there. I laughed. Reaching the willows, I found a shell-hole, into which I threw myself, my face to the earth. Saved! Saved! I examined myself; I was unhurt; I saw my men.

Among the willows the bullets whistled; they planted themselves in the trunk above my head. It was not safe here. I slipped down under the shelter of the bank as far as the bridge. As I put my foot upon it, a bullet cut one of the wires that held it, and shook me from head to foot. I do not know how I cleared it. I found myself falling into the house whence, during the last three days, we had been firing upon the Russians. With me there came one man, Sergeant Fröhlich.

“What has happened, Fröhlich? Am I wounded?”

“No; but the Russians are coming.”

I pulled myself up and saw Major Hettinger, who had stopped and collected the runaways. He signalled to

me, called me. I could not answer him. I stopped to recover myself a little. Suddenly an artillery lieutenant on horseback came into the kitchen, into which I had stumbled. In great haste he packed up his field-glasses and I do not know what else.

“What is happening?”

“We leave our guns. We’re off. The Russians have come!”

I went out, too, and took the road that led from the château to the village. I met a Staff Colonel on horseback who was leading the scattered soldiers. He saw me.

“And what are you doing?”

“Colonel, we have been in the front line four days on the other side of the river. We have exhausted our ammunition, and we have been repulsed.”

“And where do you put the honour of the Austro-Hungarian Army?”

“I don’t know, Colonel,” I replied.

He looked at me attentively, but I must have appeared dazed, for he said nothing further and fell upon the lieutenant. A little farther along I met Lieutenant-Colonel Draskoezy, the Commander of our regiment. I told him what we had done, I explained that we were retiring. “Very well, very well,” he said gently. “Go and rest!”

Hettinger had managed to keep enough men together to hold the *enceinte* of the château and keep back the

Russians, who had been unwilling to press on for other reasons. In half an hour I got my men together and discovered that there were only forty-six survivors of the whole company. I posted them in ditches and shell holes, and we began to fire on the Russians, who were doubling towards my old firing line. Some parties of them were leading away prisoners from our 2nd Battalion to their old trenches by the river. The movement was noticed by one of our batteries, commanded by a Hungarian officer, who gave orders to fire blindly into the whole crowd. Many Russians *and more prisoners* were killed in this way.

At nightfall we went to the village and made ourselves at home in a house with our wounded. The men were quartered in a barn, and I then took stock of the situation.

Dejenariu had had his right arm broken by a machine-gun bullet. In the evening I helped to take him down to the ambulance, but until then he had to lie out on the ground ; as a matter of fact, he came back to the village later on with Murarescu and several other " casualties." Victor, my orderly, had been captured by the Russians, with all my belongings on him. We also heard that General Heuner and Lieutenant Vida, his aide-de-camp, had been wounded by shell-fire. Many officers and men had fled without stopping to Chyrow.

Why had the Russian attack succeeded ? I think

because we had not yet learnt what unity of action meant. Our General had sent us to make a frontal attack on the enemy's trenches. The orders stated that the 23rd Infantry would attack on our right, whereas the 23rd was actually resting that day. The 2nd Battalion of our 23rd Territorials was only concerned in the frontal attack. They fired away all their cartridges and, finding their right flank turned by the Russians, the men in the front line came out of their trenches, waving handkerchiefs in token of surrender. Part of the reserves bolted, and only about eighty of them were rounded up. Captain Abraham, my battalion Commander, was shot through the head, and my friend Dr. Chirilovici (lawyer, of Ilia) through the heart. Five officers were taken prisoner, including Tovna Vasinca and Augustin Blăjan, both friends of mine.

The only battalion officer to get away was Weindl, the sapper. He told me that in one place the Russians had thrown down their arms and come forward to surrender. He also told me that the Russian bombardment of the hill his men were holding was so fierce that it was a real miracle he had come out alive.

My own company, the 11th, had at one moment been under fire from four quarters at once. Russian machine-guns were pelting us from the hill; the enemy opposite was firing at us as they advanced, and we were treated to a flank fire from a party that had worked round from

Felstyn to the left of the house where we had spent so many terrible hours. To crown all, a company of the 1st Battalion of the 23rd Territorials, commanded by Glosz, a Hungarian, had crossed the Sterwiaz and from the cover of the willows fired at the Russians over our heads. Now everyone knows that in action the majority of men do not aim, but simply bury their heads in the ground and blaze away. It thus happened that the bullets of our reserves occasionally landed in our backs. Comanescu vowed that at least two of his men had been hit from behind.

As I passed by the trench where my orderlies were sheltering I gave them a call. It appears that they did not hear me, but none the less realised that the company was retiring. Victor came out and suggested cutting across the river. Before this could be acted on, the Russians came out from Felstyn, and the last I heard was that he and fifteen other men walked into them and gave themselves up. The Russians got as far as our house, and before they took away their prisoners they set them to bandage those of our wounded who were too far gone to be removed from the trenches. While I went to see how Dejenariu was getting on, two wounded men, one hit in the head and the other in the foot, turned up at the ambulance and told us they had been bandaged by the Russians themselves. Decent fellows!

After this action my battalion was reduced to 160

men, but fortunately the bulk of the absentees were only wounded. I was lucky in that my two good corporals, Botzoman and Serban, had survived.

About one o'clock at night I was suddenly roused by an intense bombardment and heavy rifle-fire. Shrapnel and high-explosive rained on the houses and buildings in which we poor shattered survivors were seeking a little rest.

This 14th of October whitened my hair, but also cured me entirely of any sentiment of fear. I told my men: "Well, boys, after this not one of us can die." It was certainly not our fault that we had failed to hold our positions. The true culprits were our Staff and the reserves which had left us to our fate.

*October 15th.*

From six in the morning to the evening we remained within our fortified château, spending our time in throwing up rough defences. Food and rest were alike out of the question on this terrible day. Hundreds of shells passed over our heads on their way to harass the village and the Chyrow road. A large number of our horses were killed and much damage was done to stores and so forth.

Our field kitchen vanished and Filip Petru, a wise and wary old peasant, was slain by the same shell which killed his two horses.

About midday I noticed a company of Austrian



Landsturm of the 3rd Styrian Territorials advancing in the open between our blockhouse and the village of Felstyn. Five men fell almost at once and were left to rot on the ground, burial apparently being a forgotten luxury. In the afternoon another company of the same regiment came up to reinforce us. A communicative sergeant told me that they had a free fight with some Viennese troops one night at Lemberg. I also learned that the Austrians had bolted like maniacs at Grodek, abandoning their artillery and everything else that incommoded their flight. My informant added an anecdote which throws a good deal of light on the similarity between the Russian and Roumanian characters. During a bayonet charge some Russian and Roumanian troops, moved at the same moment by the same instinct, had simultaneously thrown away their weapons in order to get to closer quarters with their fists.

An underground passage, with stone vaulting, led from the château to the river, and it was there that I spent the night and wrote these notes.

*October 16th.*

We lay hid in our burrows all day while the Russian artillery fire on the château and behind, where one of our batteries was posted, attained such a pitch of intensity as to suggest a continuous earthquake. Whenever a shell struck the solid walls of the château, bricks and mortar

flew in all directions, and such a cloud of dust was raised that we had to cover our faces with our handkerchiefs to prevent suffocation. One or two men were actually killed by fragments of brick. A big shell which fell in the middle of a reserve company of the 23rd Infantry killed thirty men and wounded seventy.

We learned to-day that the Russians had attacked our right wing near Sambor and been repulsed. Also that we were awaiting arrival of the Third Corps, which was being sent to drive the Russians from Przemysl.

*October 17th.*

We were roused by the sound of an intense cannonade all along the line and thought the Russians must be on us. But it was only a false alarm. The artillery duel continued all day and we suffered further casualties from shell-fire. At the dressing-station two slightly wounded men about to leave for Chyrow in the ambulance had their legs broken by a shell.

This morning our regimental Staff took up its abode in our superb natural dug-out. The ancient haunt of toads and snakes was thoroughly cleaned out and prepared to accommodate our mess and sleeping quarters. We spent the whole day there listening idly to the crashes of the bursting shells outside. No one, not even our Colonel, had any idea of the situation or had made any additional arrangements for the defence of the château.

In the afternoon a sharp fight took place in and around Felstyn, which caught fire and burnt steadily until night-fall. By that time our château resembled the ragged count of fiction. The tower had been demolished by the Russian fire and the rest was all in ruins.

We had had practically nothing to eat all day, for our field-cookers were said to have fled to Polena.

In the evening the Russian patrols came down to the river, within fifty yards of us.

October 18th.

Another Sunday, a day usually selected by the Russians for their attacks. To right and left of us we could hear heavy rifle-fire and the rattle of machine-guns. Later, low growls showed that heavy guns had joined in. All day the batteries were "praying" for each other's destruction. We listened for a time, and then got tired of it and went to sleep in our underground paradise. The Lord made the Sabbath for a day of rest.

The men read "The Visions of Our Lady" or "Octoich" all day, with intervals for washing, vermin-strafting and sleep on the hillside in their straw-lined trenches.

I made many attempts to get some news, but no one seemed to know anything. The superior officers were obviously guessing, and had no notion of what was going on to right and left, and even in front of them. But, loyal as ever to *Gehorsam* (Austrian blind obedience),

they could speak of nothing but victories. I ventured no reply, but smiled with my eyes closed. When the demi-gods grew tired of winning victories with their mouths, they took to slandering my nation, calling us "Gesindel," "Schufte" and "Feige," while I pretended to be asleep. Even Hettinger affected to be shocked that Roumania had not lifted a finger to liberate her nationals in Bessarabia. Had she no national ideal? . . . Fancy *their* speaking of an ideal! Did they not know that among our modest peasant soldiery were souls more noble than their own, intellects more gifted, spirits more inspired? How should they know it? What *could* they know of the ideal which slumbered in the broken hearts of the thousands of Roumanians whom they treated like dogs? . . .

Late in the afternoon the château, too, caught fire, and there seemed nothing left in the world but burning villages and roaring guns. Our kitchens arrived at midnight, and I gave out the rations and spent the night with the men. I had had enough of my commissioned brethren for the time being.

*October 19th.*

Still in our dug-out. thinking hard—for what else was there to do?—and smoking innumerable cigarettes Outside, the autumn sun shone with all his dying glory and made me reflective. What on earth were all these

millions of men fighting for ? Why were they enduring all these miseries ? Does anyone really know the true cause of this European conflagration ? Could not the ideals and needs of the nations of the earth be satisfied by other means in this age of Culture ? Did it really mean that Humanity must relapse into a state of primitive savagery before it could take a step forward in the path of progress ?

I was asking myself these questions while a group of officers round our O.C. were debating whether army officers or civil officials were the better paid. Was I wrong to call them mercenaries ? The plain truth was that these men had nothing to think of but their pay. If war really meant justice, a single shell would have destroyed the lot and spared only the men, the simple labourers and peasants who form the really productive element of the population. Perhaps the highly exceptional cases of men of light and leading among the so-called "officer class" might be spared too.

I regret to say we had not had a wash since we had taken up our abode in the château. The men, infested with vermin, stripped to the skin and disinfected themselves. Some even indulged in the luxury of a shave and hair-cut.

The guns sang their sinister songs all day, and the upper storey of the château slowly crumbled away. Our gunners were not slow to take refuge in the cellars.

Since yesterday, efforts had been made to bring my company up to strength. I received 54 men from the remains of the 2nd Battalion and 32 from the 10th Company, broken up after Dejenariu's departure. I had now three platoons at my disposal, the nucleus being my Făgăras company, about 50 strong. Since the 13th I had been the only officer left. The regiment itself was reduced from three battalions to two: the 1st and the 3rd.

About ten o'clock at night, just when the customary evening performance of infantry-fire usually began, Hettinger's stentorian voice summoned us to the terrace, which was heavily fortified. The Russians were coming. All of us who were there opened heavy fire, while our reserves below hastily collected their belongings. We thought ourselves lost. We had two machine-guns belonging to the 23rd on the parapet, and they began to spit forth merrily, while the gun on our left—placed there specially to meet night attacks—fired point-blank. We looked like being in for a stiff fight, but ten minutes later silence was restored. There had been no attack at all. Our Major, worn out, had *thought* he had seen the Russians crossing the river. As a matter of fact, a Russian attack would have had an easy success. We had sited our trenches in front of the outer line of fortifications, eight metres wide, so that the enemy could approach uphill sheltered from our fire. We had left what is technically known as "dead" ground.

However, I left the top of our fortress with my company, and drew up a trench scheme, which I submitted to the Major for approval. He put some engineers at my disposal to execute it during the night. That same night I was presented with a box of hand-grenades. I had never set eyes on such things before.

*October 20th.*

The night was calm. We were awaiting a Russian attack. I had discovered a niche in a hole just below my company, and, wrapped in rugs, I was endeavouring to sleep; but I was not even drowsy. The Russian patrols were creeping about under the willows near the river. They kept up a continuous fire to annoy us. It was a habit of theirs, partly to prevent themselves from falling asleep, partly so that their officers could control them more easily. It also kept their enemies on the alert. Sometimes their shots went home. One of our scouts, Peter Mosneag, had been found dead when they went to change the guard. During the night my men worked incessantly with the engineers, and by morning I was able to get them settled in the trenches.

There was a magnificent sunrise. Through a veil of mist and cloud, the sun shone radiant. I looked at it for a long time. It seemed like an evil thing, giving life to a world of wickedness and sorrow. My eyes fell

on the house by the riverside, where we had left so many dead and wounded. Behind the house one could still see bodies which had not been buried. Ah! how many were the desolate homes in Ardéal? How many children waiting for those who would never again return? How many mothers, their babies in their arms, wandering through the village, weeping bitterly? The sorrow of the return surpassed that of the going forth. . . .

The artillery duel began again. This morning it seemed as though all were lost. Grenades and shells hurtled through the air. The noise of their whistlings and explosions was terrific. One could not speak to be heard even by one's neighbour. The shock of it stunned us. Except for a party of artillerymen behind the château, who were reduced to abject terror, the men did not seem to feel much fear.

I happened to come across a few copies of the *Tageblatt*. In one of them I discovered the news of the death of King Carol. To me, at any rate, it was the most serious happening of this war. This is the text of the notes in my pocket-book: "King Carol! His name recalled the most splendid chapter in the history of our nation. His vigorous personality had carved a new path for Roumania, and through her for the Roumanian people. During his reign, which filled the second half of the 19th century, the War of Liberation took place. Art and literature began to develop throughout the nation. In



fifty years the morale of the nation has awakened and grown. National education has been adopted.

“The wisdom of the King, his foresight, his tact, his perseverance, made him for us both guide and saviour. I can remember his kindness when we presented to him, in 1905, the number of ‘Luceagar’ that we had dedicated to him. During a dinner at Castel-Pelesh he talked to us like a father, and questioned us about Ardéal. But I believe that his vision had lost its acuteness in this conflict of the European Powers. I have heard it said that at the Crown Council he gambled away his sceptre and kingdom for the cause of the Triple Alliance. I absolutely believe that the neutrality of Roumania is the result of disagreement between the King and people. The personality of the King was too great, the loyalty of the people too deeply rooted to allow them to oppose his will. Now that this pillar of the Triple Alliance at the mouth of the Danube has disappeared, the Sage of the Balkans has closed his eyes for ever, who is going to replace him? The heir has appeared very little in public life up to the present. Opinions of him are rife. Is it to be his mission in these troubled days to lead our people to victory? I think of the old evil customs that infest the public life of Roumania, and I fear the poison of these Levantine weeds. The moment is ripe for treason. I have such faith, however, in the ultimate triumph of the people that my doubts are stilled. I *know* what

they feel, what they desire, what they are able to accomplish. It must be accomplished! Wise and loyal leaders could do marvels with these ‘canaille,’ as the people of this country deign to call us.”

I learnt from the same paper that the Russians had penetrated Körösmező in Hungary. I did not believe that they would be able to advance as far as Ronuli and Parva. The paper added that the Austro-Hungarian Armies had beaten them and that they were again retiring towards Galicia. They retired, I fear, in the same fashion as those before me. The entry of the Russians into Hungary could not leave the Roumanians indifferent. The sacred hour of victory was not far distant. I awaited it with confidence.

This evening the scene was as grandly terrible as that of the morning. Russian shells had demolished the château. According to the inscription, which a private copied for me, it was an old building :—

NICKOLAUS TARLODES  
CE CARŽOVICE ET IN  
LASKI. HERES VEXILITER  
PREMISE EN. SIS. TOE JUS SACRE  
REGIE MAIESTATES. ANNO D.MI  
1556 ESTATISSUE 39.

The actual building, however, seemed modern. It was strongly fortified, and situated on a plain. About thirty

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paces to the east runs the Sterwiaz. Two underground passages led to it. From the château to the village there was an avenue of old trees ; from the château to the river a straight road bordered by firs. It was not a beautiful district. It was owned, they told me, by Rachia Olchaninsky. He must be a great owner of race-horses, since the stables were admirably built with iron roofs. There was a fine library, too. Plundered first by the Russians, then by us, the château was now a burning ruin. The roof and walls fell, the sparks shot upward and outward on every side. How many Polish lords and lovely countesses must have turned in their graves at the thought of this fire ! Towards midnight, even the sky wept for the fate of this ancestral home. I was obliged to turn my back on the flames and seek shelter in the hole that I had dug during the day. The planks with which I had covered it sheltered me as far as the knees. At the end of two hours my blankets were soaking, and I risked being suffocated by the falling earth. I was forced to go in with my men. They were shivering. Wrapped in their tent coverings, they looked like ghosts that the fire had driven from the cellars under the château. We watched for daybreak.

*October 21st.*

The night's rain quite altered the aspect of the camp. The men dug their trenches deeper, and covered them

with branches, doors, bits of iron and tenting. One was reminded of the booths at a fair. A sympathetic Colonel of the Artillery, who had come to me for my report on what had been taking place around us, told me that we should remain where we were for some weeks. I at once set to work to make a more suitable dwelling-place. I had invented an idea for building a hut solidly embedded in the earth. Two men worked under my supervision until nightfall. I had a deep, square hole dug in the earth, in which were planted six strong stakes. These supported a roof of planks and tin covered with earth. I improvised a floor with some bricks from the ruined château, and made a wainscoting with some planed planks. Only about a quarter of the hut was visible above the ground. My door was made from the gold frame of an old picture. I considered that at this particular moment it was much more precious than the picture itself. I arranged a bed of planks covered with straw, a little table, a wardrobe and dressing-table. I was delighted with the general effect. Everyone who saw it admired it immensely. My golden door caused great laughter. At any rate, I now had some place where I could live and write in peace. I forgot all my troubles. The thought of the dead Austrian Landsturm not yet buried, poor Peter Mosneag whom the sappers had pitched into a ditch without tear or prayer, left me absolutely cold.

It was the food that gave us the greatest trouble. Since we arrived here we have not had a warm plate, even the officers. To-day, however, we had some delicious tomato soup sent to us by George Macelariu. Up to the present we have only eaten once a day. Sausages and preserves, bacon and raw onions formed our diet. There was nothing with which to light a fire and no way of getting to the village. We were obliged to live as best we could. Some of the men warmed their tea and preserves over candles, of which we had huge supplies. We got them from the village church, and they were waxen and very thick. There were candles of baptism, and candles of marriage ornamented with paper lace and pictures of the saints. The soldiers were given some warm food in the night. By day we were under observation and were unable to leave the trenches. Kitchens arrived in the darkness from Chyrow. The men at the château took their supply in kettles, but in the trenches we had to distribute it in the usual way. It was rice soup and meat. The distribution was the most difficult thing imaginable. First of all, in the darkness each company tried to get more than its share. The men, haggard from hunger, threw themselves on the food and fought with each other over it until they upset it. The less fastidious flung themselves on the ground and, gathering up the rice, ate it in spite of dirt. A good number of them, though, were content to wait until the following night. Again,

however, the same scene was enacted. It was impossible to keep order, even though the officers themselves endeavoured to do so with drawn swords. We had not the heart to be brutal with half-starved men, on whom neither commands nor blows had any effect. They tore at the bread and snatched spoonfuls of the soup. I discovered that a small band of men had been creeping to the village under cover of night to "buy" provisions from house to house. Two of them had come upon some sacks of flour in a cave. During the night they kneaded it and made a kind of bun, which they sold to their comrades at a crown apiece, thus making more than a hundred crowns each.

Meanwhile the trenches were rapidly becoming indescribably filthy. Each time that the wind changed it carried to us whiffs of foetid air. The men were unable to leave them. One day a sniper had killed four of them who had managed to scramble over the parapet into a ditch near the trenches. Great numbers of the men were suffering from dysentery, and even cholera had begun to make its appearance. We had had several deaths from it.

Water was a most precious item. They used to bring us some at night from the river or the wells at the château. At daytime we almost perished with thirst.

I proposed to the Commandant that we should send engineers to cover in the trenches. Up to the

present the weather had been dry, but rain might come any day. Roofless and flooded trenches would just about finish the regiment. Without pausing to think, the Commandant informed me that if it rained the men could stay in the water until they drowned. I held my tongue!

About 1,600 paces from us, near Felstyn, I discovered a house flanked by a great fir. It was a Russian observation post, and I understood now how they had been able to direct such an accurate fire on us. With a few grenades we dislodged the post without setting the house alight.

To-day an officer joined the company, Fax Ernö, a lawyer from Seghedin. Although he lived in a Roumanian parish, he did not know a word of the language. He joined the 5th Territorials of Seghedin and had not yet been in the firing line. He had been in hospital before coming to us. Last night he was in command. He thought that the Russians were preparing an attack and had us all out. He is a good lad, of rather retiring disposition.

*October 22nd.*

We had a visit from the Staff Colonel who had taken over the command of our regiment. My cabin had become famous. He was eager to see it, and congratulated me. I could not return the compliment whilst I showed him our position, which was so near that of the Russians. As we stood talking, a Russian aeroplane passed over our

heads. Some of the officers with Colonel Vidali at their head fired on it without success. The men were no longer allowed to fire without orders. It had happened that one of our own had come down in our lines.

The Staff officer gave me no positive orders. Przemyśl was in our hands. We had taken whole battalions of Russian prisoners. Our right wing had repulsed the enemy at Sambor.

This evening the village of Felstyn was burned, with the house where we had left our dead. The Russians must have set it on fire to rid themselves of the house and dead bodies. It was a magnificent spectacle.

*October 23rd.*

The day was very quiet. A dozen or so snipers disturbed our rest now and then. Since Wola-Michova, twenty days back, I had not changed my clothes and it was fifteen days since I had taken off my shoes. I was disgusted with myself. To-day I had a wash nearly from head to foot and I was also able to change. It was splendid. Only my tooth-brush was missing. Victor had that, and the Russians had my tooth-paste. As for the mud and grease on my clothes, I just had to let it be, since I had no means of removing it. I did not speak to the soldiers. The state of them repulsed me. In my "palace," as it was well named, many of my brother officers made their toilet.



Our mess was pleasant enough. An artillery officer told me that no one had any idea of the position of the enemy's batteries and trenches. They all praised Russian common sense. They had adopted from the Russians the idea of placing batteries in a triangle instead of in line, as it appeared that this arrangement facilitated quick changes of direction and flanking fire.

We were told two Russian peasants had been arrested. Special maps with the trace of our trenches had been found in their boots. They turned out to be Russian officers. We learned, too, that the inhabitants of Laszki-Murowane had also betrayed us. This day a woman, armed with two flashing eyes, had come down to our trenches. I had her arrested, as we had orders to show no mercy towards suspects.

*October 24th.*

The unending boredom was resumed. We played cards in my palace by way of killing time. By half-past ten in the morning I had nearly a thousand crowns in my bank, when suddenly shells burst against the inner wall of the trench, a couple of yards or so above our heads. We threw down the cards and fled into the dug-out. The explosion had buried two men, who had to be extricated by some engineers. One of them was quite dumb with fright, but they were both safe and sound. One of the

pioneers was killed and three infantry privates were wounded.

The battle continued stubbornly in the Sambor direction until late at night. The 31st Regiment from Sibiu took 100 Russian prisoners. We were allowed no respite either. The 3rd Landsturm Regiment left, and we took up its position in the open near Felstyn.

The number of our officers was steadily diminishing. Comanescu and Luther left one after the other and I had no one with whom to exchange a friendly word. In addition I had been feeling ill the whole afternoon.

*October 25th.*

Shells flew overhead all day. It was Sunday, of course. A shell struck a tree a yard and a-half thick and hurled it into our corner trench. My poor shanty and I went down together. All the ground round began to open gaping mouths and the trenches crumbled in in many places.

About midday a rumour came round that we were going to retire. At dawn a Russian patrol had passed within a hundred feet of us, and we had fired without hitting anything. The Major would not hear of our retreat. As for our regimental Commander, this was one of the days on which he did not appear. I risked a joke: "As long as our Colonel isn't here, there is nothing to be afraid of." There was a shout of laughter.

However, we made all preparations to withdraw, and at length an order came—to get ready at once, as we were to make an attack. I inspected the men. All the ground in front of us was swept by our cross-fire. At nightfall the Russians by the river bank opened a heavy fire upon us, but we made no reply and kept a sharp look-out with hand-grenades. I had distributed the grenades among the officers and N.C.O.'s, but not one of us had ever handled one before. We had only had instructions how to throw them. After half an hour the Russian fire died down, but fighting continued all night in the Sambor direction.

At supper the officers, strangers to our race and soul, once more resumed their criticism of us. They affected “to have expected better things of us.” In what way? No one could say. The Major protested that the Twelfth Corps was the best in the whole Austro-Hungarian Army and that was precisely why the Roumanians had been thrown into the fight. It was a great pity that Count Tisza was not there to see. He would tell us why Ardéal had been emptied of its Wallachians. The Roumanians, although they fought against their convictions, did their duty—and something more. Generally speaking they were brave. True, it was sometimes difficult to get them to the danger-spot, for they were always thinking of their homes and families; but in the heat of battle they bore themselves well. After all, was it *their* fault if their foreign officers usually set them a poor example and ill-used them?

On the previous evening Second Lieutenant Semkovici, a lawyer of Sibiiu, had drawn blood from Corporal Munkanu, who came to complain to me that they had nearly killed him. He bolted that night, the only case of desertion I ever remember.

Our cook, Frâncu, told me that Dr. Bontescu had died of cholera and been buried this day.

The distribution of the rations then proceeded in good order and the men got some tea after their rice soup and meat.

My good friend Macelariu came to call on me in my dug-out and made himself universally popular with our officers. I pressed his hand as if it had been a brother's when he gave me the news that the Territorials were to be returned to Hungary.

*October 26th.*

The battle continued all day. We heard—and the news was confirmed from the papers—that our front formed a right angle from Przemyśl past Chyrow to Stryj. We were exactly at the angle. There had been violent fighting on the Chyrow-Stryj line where the Third and Seventh Corps were at work. The struggle was less heavy round Przemyśl, and we were waiting for the Fourth Corps, which was very late. We heard that the Russians had intended to break our centre by attacking our positions in the Sterwiaz valley. We knew our

strength and were uneasy, especially because we had had orders to hold on at all costs. Our Commanding Officer had not yet put in an appearance.

We played cards all afternoon and evening. About ten the fighting became furious round Sambor. Nothing could be heard but one immense roar, intensified by the thunder of the artillery. A hailstorm of shells fell on us over the willows by the bank. We threw down our cards and skipped off. Semkovici, on duty, was the first to enter the trench where I had my observation post. He put his head out, just to get a better view, and fell back right on me, hit by a bullet under the right ear before he could get out a cry. All this in a few seconds! I had him brought into my shelter, five paces off, but even in that short time his purse was taken from his pocket.

Late at night we heard that six trains of recruits, with some heavy mortars, had arrived at Chyrow. This was comforting news, but none the less fear of terrors to come gave us shivers down the spine.

*October 27th.*

We were rewarded for an early turn-out by a splendid sunrise. Fiery red, he emerged from black clouds like a wounded head swathed in mourning veils, and as if he wept for the crimes of the earth on which he shed his glorious rays.

I had one particular satisfaction at tea. The Major declared that we had committed a great blunder on the day we abandoned our positions beyond the river, the very positions I had held with my 11th Company. On October 14th, when we had retired, I had maintained that our positions were a continuation of the trenches on the hill, and that we should need the whole battalion, with strong reserves, to hold it. I had also asked for engineers to dig new lines. And if *we* should be driven back, I considered it essential to maintain our hold on the river bank which was occupied by Luther's company. And now my merits as a tactician were recognised.

The artillery duel continued all day. Our guns succeeded in setting fire to some of the houses in Felstyn. A Russian aviator manœuvred immediately above our heads. I invited him by three shots of my Mannlicher to come down, but he was not to be tempted.

We were heavily engaged . . . in a game of cards, when the shells made us bolt to our dug-out. These villainous Russians! Yesterday evening they killed a friend and now they broke in on our sole distraction. We swore vengeance.

This day's novelty was the arrival of a lieutenant of police who had asked to be sent to the front. He was very brand new, would not move from the trenches, and stared wide-eyed all round. He gave a contemptuous glance at us playing cards. We old soldiers let him wander at his own sweet will.

I have already shown on several occasions that our foreign officers maltreated the Roumanian soldiers, and even behaved barbarously and brutally towards them. Strong language was nothing, and there was hardly a day passed without some attempt to catch them out. On one occasion, for going into the officers' latrines, a man was flogged—twenty-five strokes. Another, who refused to give his water to the sergeant, received a kick in the stomach. Another, who was caught stealing raw potatoes, was arrested and flogged. He belonged to my company and I had been asked to give him another twenty-five stripes, but I let him off with two nights' guard and a couple of spansks for form's sake, just to show the others that chastisement had been duly inflicted. I noticed that the officers had a real hatred of our people. And to think that I had to live with them and fight with my Roumanians for their benefit. What a curse was upon me !

Budac, a cook of ours, came back this evening with his noddle full of news. At Stari-Sambor the Ardéaleans had been in contact with the Bessarabians. There had been heavy casualties on both sides and many prisoners had been taken. Our men had captured 400 Roumanians in Russian uniforms, one of whom was a sergeant who had seen service in the 31st of Sibiiu and had been surprised by the way while tending his sheep in Bessarabia. During the fight they had shouted out: "Don't fire. We are Roumanians too !"

And Budac questioned me: "What are we coming to when brothers slay brothers? It is the chastisement of God." The prisoner sergeant told them that the Bessarabians do not want to fight the Roumanians, and in fact would surrender *en bloc* if they were not afraid of being mutilated, for the Russian officers had told them that we tore out the eyes and cut off the ears of our prisoners. Then my cook, as good as a *raconteur* as in his profession, whispered in my ear that the Russians were blowing up as thick as blades of grass, but that on our side, too, the youngsters had been coming up in an unending stream, warm-blooded and fresh boys, without a hair to their chins. What had made the greatest impression on our Budac was the big guns, "big enough to hold a man quite easily in their mouths."

Before supper had ended the Russians serenaded us again, but we had no ears for them.

*October 28th-29th.*

Days of boredom. We finished our trenches and roofed them with planks and sheet-iron. Our Commanding Officer had still not put in an appearance, and was said to be playing chess with the doctors in the village.

The artillery pursued its task, and we heard that it had stricken terror into the Russians.

On the 29th I discovered the first louse on the collar of my tunic—an exceptionally fine specimen. I had not



set eyes on such an object since the days of my youth, when I used to wander among the sheepfolds in the mountains and sleep with the shepherds.

*October 30th-31st.*

Two days of quiet, which we used to ransack the village for straw, mattresses, pillows, blankets and other minor comforts. The cold became very severe, especially at night.

On the 30th I witnessed a horrid scene in the trenches. Some twenty men of the 1st Company, commanded by the engineer Weindl, were punished for eating their reserve rations. And such a punishment! The "delinquents" were lined up in a row and beaten, one by one, from behind by the sergeant-major. Each man who quailed before these brutal blows and staggered forward under their weight was immediately smitten on the head or full in the face until he bled. Some fell in a heap, others went down on their knees and begged their tormentors not to kill them. The reply was, redoubled and more ferocious vigour in the blows. Next day half of them were sent down to the doctor, and I don't know what became of them.

Just at that time we were playing cards in my dug-out. The foreign officers lost no time in congratulating the sergeant on his energy and swearing at the men. Of

course, I fell out with them, and after supper, when they once more turned to cursing the Roumanians in the presence of the Major, who did nothing to restrain them, I left them without a good-night. I let them know that I had not come out campaigning to hear Hungarians insult us. Next morning Lieutenant Barna came round to make peace and promise that this behaviour should not be repeated.

A gulf of deadly hatred appeared between the officers and men. The Hungarian officers, mad to think that Roumania had not declared herself for them, vented their rage on our peasants. They knocked them about abominably, and boasted each night of their schemes of punishment, of which hunger, continuous sentry-go and the stake (to which men were tied up) were the mildest.

Thus physical misery was not the only thing we had to endure. To it was added the moral torture of serving in the Austro-Hungarian Army. Several of my men vowed that in the first fight they would start by killing off all these officers. . . .

*November 1st.*

It was just three months since I had girded on my sword to defend the Hapsburg Empire. What a lot I could have read and written in these three months. And yet I could not regret that Destiny had thrown me into the field of battle. I conceive these three months

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as among the most valuable of my life and more instructive than books could ever have been. In this awful upheaval I had lived on perils which shake the soul to its inmost depths. Day and night I had been with my peasants, and seeing them at close quarters had learned to know and love them better. I had an unshakeable conviction that our peasant race would one day reign over the Carpathians and the Balkans, and be the French of the East. Our peasant (intelligent, if slow of mind and speech) tactful and adaptable, will one day rid us of the defects of the upper social stratum which has adopted all the faults of the West and East. He it is who will re-establish our national life, the true life, in the teeth of all our foes.

War has wrought great changes in me, and I have new views of the world and life itself. I see clearly that life is a serious business, that in its truceless strife only *ordered* work, without selfish ambitions, can bring us to our goal. I have become a soldier, and I mean to preserve the essential discipline of soldiering. I feel myself a better man. And where better than here could I explore the human mind and the ancient feuds which keep the races of the earth apart ?

*November 2nd.*

As we seemed unlikely to move from this spot, we

began to settle down for the winter. The cold became more and more intolerable, and our hands and feet were frequently frost-bitten. The men dug deeper holes and lined them with thick layers of straw. Everything that could be got from the village found its way eventually to the trenches—doors, windows, pots, plates, crockery. A use was found for all. A spring mattress was an excellent foundation for straw and the earth which roofed the trenches. A cupboard door made an excellent door to a dug-out. The cloth and stuff the men found went to reinforce their nether garments. The great pots, filled with cinders, made excellent and safe braziers, for we must make no smoke. The woodwork of the piano from the château made first-class fuel.

Our subterranean tunnel underwent a transformation. The exit, near the river, was closed up, and we found real doors for the other end. Two expert chimney-builders installed a stove, the draught pipe of which was made from the eaves of the village church. Chairs, sofas, bowls, plates and jugs—everything pertaining to a well-stocked establishment—appeared in due course. My “Tâslăuanu Palace” was quite in keeping. I had an ottoman, a mirror on my back wall, and real panes of glass in my door. I sent out a patrol to find me a stove.

The men built themselves rough shelters, necessity proving, as ever, the mother of invention.

Here we received welcome news. Paris had fallen. Warsaw was about to fall. Sambor was still in our hands. But who could be got to believe it ?

*November 3rd.*

An artillery officer was cracking up the Russian artillery and decrying ours. A Hungarian was full of admiration for their marksmanship. He was posted in the village of Felstyn, only two hundred paces from the enemy. One of his men poked the barrel of his rifle over the top of the trench : it was immediately hit by a Russian bullet. Another man, gesticulating, raised his arm and was immediately wounded. Whereupon several men also raised their arms, to be wounded and sent off to hospital. The officers had to exercise unsleeping vigilance to prevent their men putting their arms out of the trench.

*November 4th.*

This morning we received a publication, straight from the printing office, in three languages, to be read out to the men. I am setting out here the Roumanian version :

**“ BULLETIN OF THE SECOND ARMY.**

*“ Staff of the Armies, on November 3rd, in Russian Poland  
and on the San.*

*“ At Stari-Sambor a decisive victory awaits us. At*

Czernowitz (Bukowina), which we have reconquered, the Russians have attacked with great forces, but all their efforts have been broken against our lines with immense loss.

“We see by Russian prisoners, most of whom have passed their fortieth year, that Russia has no longer younger troops to bring forward, and that her reservoir of men, which appeared so enormous at the start, has already been drained.

“A mood of desperation is falling on Russia by reason of the enormous loss she has suffered already and because the Russians have no longer any hope of victory over our Monarchy.

“In Serbia, our Army turned the Serbs out of their entrenchments on October 30th, and pushed its attack into the heart of the country. We have taken from them many prisoners, guns, machine-guns and flags.

“The German Army, acting in close concert with ours, is advancing into Northern France and, after bloody fighting, is approaching Paris.

“The attempts of the British Fleet to bombard from the sea the lines of the German Army have been without result, and the English themselves are afraid of a bombardment by German aeroplanes.

“Headquarters reports that ‘from an unimpeachable source we have received details as to the low tricks which

mark Russian fighting. For the capture, dead or alive, of any of our regimental Commanders, they offer a reward of 80,000 roubles. This explains the regular hunt for our officers. But their desires in this direction have not been fulfilled.'

"This report shows us the kind of enemy with which we have to deal. The murder of their sovereigns, of our princes and leaders, *that* is their means of defence. [Here a line is missing, which the author deems it his duty to omit.] . . . they use our signals and dress up in our uniforms. We have proof that they place their caps in rows while they themselves hide in their trenches at two to three thousand metres distance and fire with impunity. When the fighting ardour of their men slackens, they adopt the following plan to keep the men in the firing line. The men are put in first line, the non-commissioned officers in the second, and the officers in the third. When the men look like bolting to the rear, the N.C.O.'s fire over their heads to keep them where they are. But even this does not prevent the cunning Russian soldier from deceiving his officer. When he sees that the fight is all up, he lies flat and gives himself up to our men.

"The Russian Lieutenant-Colonel Grodicsing, whom we have captured, declares that the siege of Przemyśl has cost the Russians nearly 40,000 men. The Russian Commander before this town was the Bulgarian General Dimitrieff, who flew into a rage when he heard of the

annihilation of his troops. He ordered a new assault, but our Second Army, which had just come up from Chyrow, compelled him to retire.

“While this Second Army has been fighting for four weeks on the right wing, fierce fighting has taken place on the left wing also. The great Russian town of Warsaw is bombarded daily by our aeroplanes. The Russians fire at them with machine-guns installed in the steeples of churches, but without result.

“A Russian Captain, now a prisoner, gives his opinion of our infantry in the following terms: ‘We are compelled to admire the Austro-Hungarian infantry, and this admiration weakens the Russian infantry, so that immediately the Austro-Hungarians approach, the Russians are filled with fear, shoot wildly, and take to flight.’

“The Russian newspaper *Russkoje Slowo* writes as follows about our cavalry: ‘We must, although we are enemies, render homage to the courage of the Austro-Hungarian cavalry. It advances like a black cloud. Our men fire, but it still comes on. Two regiments of Cossacks try to stop it, and a frightful mêlée follows. The Magyars fight against certain death, but they defend themselves like lions, and swing their sabres round like axes. Two Cossacks had their heads shorn off above the ears. A Hungarian officer fought on when Cossacks had him impaled on the end of their lances. Even the wounded fought to their last breath. At least 400 fell. This



behaviour has made us change our minds about the Hungarian soldiers.'

"When our troops reoccupied Czernowitz we understand that the inhabitants hailed our men as saviours, took them in their arms and embraced them. The buildings in the town have not suffered much during the Russian occupation, but we do not yet know what the population, most of it Roumanian, had to endure.

"The capture by the German Army of the fortress of Antwerp in Belgium only took twelve days, although it is one of the strongest places in the world. The lion's share in this operation fell to our big guns, lent to the Germans. The Russians took four weeks to fail in their attempt on Przemyśl.

"Our aeroplanes often came back riddled with bullets, as our men sometimes fire on them by mistake. As it is difficult to distinguish our machines from those of the enemy, firing on all machines has been prohibited for fear that our brave aviators may be hit by their own men. The only firing allowed is at Russian aeroplanes, which are easily recognisable by their great size, being built to carry twenty-four persons.

"A soldier of a regiment of Tyrolese Jäger had received an order to take up four cows to his regiment. The animals went forward slowly and the soldier dropped behind. At the edge of a wood he was surprised by a patrol of Cossacks. Pipe in mouth our soldier dropped into a ditch

and coolly began to fire. Four Cossacks dropped from their saddles and the rest fled. But a whole squadron of Cossacks succeeded them. Our brave fellow was in no wise dismayed, but hid in the bushes and again blazed away. Seven Cossacks fell and the others, nervous as to what was hidden in the wood, galloped off. The Tyrolese emerged from his hiding-place. An officer on patrol, who had seen him from afar, pressed him to join his troop without delay. The man coolly replied : ' This beastly noise has frightened one of my beasts, but I'm not going to leave it to the Russians.' Indeed, the man refused to go until he had got his animals together. The officer, having forgotten the name of this splendid fellow, was compelled by his Commander to go back and find it out so that a suitable reward might be given.

"Sergeant Joan Roczaj, of the 95th Infantry, showed great courage in defending his regimental flag. At a critical moment he crossed the river Zlota Lipa, flag in hand, and thus brought it away safely. Then he swam back to the other bank to bring back a wounded officer. For this action the sergeant has been decorated with the Gold Medal."

At the same time we received confidential information to hold ourselves ready to leave, for this evening we were to be withdrawn towards Hungary. As I read this, I took off my *képi* and made the sign of the Cross. Murarescu,

my orderly, began to do up our baggage, weeping with joy the while. At midday we had a bottle of champagne, glad to think that fresh troops were coming up to relieve us. But just as we were about to start we were told, to our intense amazement, that we were retiring along the whole front. But what about our victories, then? . . . And we actually heard that the Russians were trying to cut off our retreat!

At half-past five in the evening we left, in perfect peace and order, the trenches in which we had mouldered for three weeks. The men looked like spectres and could do nothing but cross themselves. We left behind us tens of thousands of rounds and almost as many rifles. A few men were also left behind to cover our departure for two hours.

We went as far as Starzawa, but, heavily laden and unaccustomed to marching, our legs gave way beneath us and the fresh air made us damp. At Starzawa we were billeted in a factory. All around us were huts packed with cholera-stricken men. Our men drank from an infected fountain and we officers followed them. No one said anything. We could hardly expect anyone to bother about us in a contaminated village. Our joy at leaving Laszki-Murowane was ruined by our fear of contagion. All the same, we slept in our hovels, the men above in the attics and the officers in the "rooms," full of bugs and filth.

## THE RETREAT INTO THE CARPATHIANS

*November 5th.*

It was always the same old story. By midday we had received four different orders: (1) To be ready to start. We were ready. (2) To parade the men for anti-cholera inoculation. A party of our men went off for inoculation at once, God knows how. (3) To wait in the open. We did so, lighting fires and cooking potatoes. (4) To take up our quarters in a saw-mill. We took up our quarters, swearing lustily.

If I remember rightly, this saw-mill, belonging to the Grödel, Jews, was absolutely destroyed. The machinery—which had cost millions—was all smashed up. The colossal boilers were broken in, the sheds in fragments, the tools destroyed, the stocks scattered and planks littered the whole place. Only the great baulks of fir had defied the fury of war and were still lying intact.

Our 1st Battalion now had Captain Voeres, a nonentity from the 24th Battalion, as its Commander. We of the 3rd Battalion still had our Lieutenant of Gendarmes, terribly proud and brave . . . since we had escaped all danger. Both of them thought of themselves alone and left their commands to the care of the Father. Major

Hettinger, our old leader, never allowed himself any rest until he had got his men quartered, company by company.

At 8 o'clock in the evening we reached Berechy, near Ustrzycki.

*November 6th.*

From half-past six in the morning we were digging trenches in the vicinity of the village of Ustrzycki. This was only playing at war, for if the Russians really attacked us they would shoot us in the back from the top of the hill.

At midday we left for Rovnia, another village a little farther on. We were here billeted in the stables and outhouses of a country house. The servants trembled with fear, and all the good-looking girls kept out of our sight.

Our four regiments of Territorials now formed only one, with four battalions, numbered as follows: 21/I; 22/II; 23/III, and 24/IV.

I was still in command of the 11th Company, the strength of which had been increased by 67 to 207. The command of our 23/III Battalion fell to Major Paternos, a man of culture and fine feeling. The Commander of the amalgamated regiments was Lieutenant-Colonel Maetze. Our Draskoczy became the Brigadier, for we were now both regiment and brigade—and the devil knows what else besides.

*November 7th.*

The day was bright and warm. Under the bank by the roadside a peasant woman was in charge of a cart laden with household belongings of all kinds and drawn by two lean kine. With her elbows on the side rail and her hands clasped, she was praying in an attitude of fervent devotion worthy of a Madonna. Was she thanking God that we were going ?

The bridge over the San was mined. A bridge-making detachment was preparing to leave, and a battery on a hill turned its guns on Lisko. At half-past five we stopped at Zagarz, and night fell. The troops got mixed up, and confusion reigned supreme. The 11th Company received orders to go to Zaslavie to oppose the crossing of the Russian cavalry. We reached the banks of the San near the railway bridge, and while the sappers were destroying it, I sent over a platoon to the farther bank of the river by the village of Laluz, to give us notice of the retirement of the rearguard of the Seventh Corps to Sanok.

We billeted the men, and ourselves found shelter in an inn kept by a Jew. But just at this moment the 4th Battalion of the 23rd Infantry came up, with the same mission as ourselves. Its Commander, Major Ludwig Krause, set about us in style, drove us from the inn, and our men from their billets, in order to take our place. We had a good opportunity to admire the

comradeship which reigns in the Austro-Hungarian Army, and the wise dispositions of our High Command. We sent someone down to our Major to tell him what had happened. The reply came about midnight. We were to stay where we were.

We assembled once more in the Jew's kitchen, smelling and reeking with smoke. The Jew sold us a litre of wine for 3 crowns 20. Dr. Schuller was highly indignant and began to browbeat the Jew, and I promised we should get our own back. Our Lieutenant Szinte could not forget Major Krause's high-handed bullying of officers who bore "the Emperor's sword" no less than himself. The Commander and his staff snored peacefully, quite oblivious of us and our needs.

At 1 a.m. we discovered an empty room in a school, and we began to think of sleep. But just then we received a report from the platoon which had crossed the San. The Seventh Corps had retired, blowing up its bridges, and from four in the afternoon the Cossacks had been seen at Tyrawa-Woloska, ten kilometres away. Fancy sleeping on that! Szinte went off to rouse the Major and tell him what was afoot. But the Major was furious and asked to be left alone. To H—— with the Cossacks!

*November 8th.*

I got up at 5 o'clock, for, when danger is about, I like to make my own dispositions. From the bridge I could

see before me a line of hills which commanded our village. To the right, beyond the San, was a meadow bounded in the distance by wooded slopes. To the left, on our side of the river, were open fields, flat as a table, until the confluence of the San and the Oslava was reached. Thus our situation was very difficult. The enemy could easily command and turn our positions. We must resort to stratagem and deceive him into thinking our strength four times what it actually was. Amiable Major Krause had left us without so much as a "good-day," and taken his officers and the rest of the battalion with him. We had *one* company with which to hold a front of 3,000 metres.

The platoon on guard across the San now returned in boats, and on its heels appeared seven Cossacks on the brow of the hill above. On our side a Captain arrived with a company of the 21st Territorials and twelve Hussars. He was instructed to press forward to Tyrawa-Woloska. He did not hurry himself, but was firmly resolved to carry out his orders.

I had never yet seen the Hussars in action—the "Red Devils," as Hungarian megalomania styled them. Consequently I was curious to see them put to the proof. I advised the Captain to send them out on a reconnaissance, and was greatly pleased when he fell in with the idea. They went off and I followed close behind. They went through the water and scattered into the meadow beyond, advancing at the trot. Soon we heard two



shots, and the moment after our Hussars came galloping back. I was the first to stop them.

“What have you seen?”

A non-commissioned officer, scared out of his wits, replied that the Russians had fired at them from eighty paces distance.

“What? It’s all lies! What have you seen? Go back at once!”

I understood now why our intelligence was so feeble. At Felstyn I had already noticed a patrol at work, which came back without having seen or observed anything. They are not to be compared with the Cossacks, who come up quite close, sometimes two or three times in succession, and only return after establishing our position and strength.

An hour later we saw a hostile cavalry regiment coming down the windings of the road towards Tyrawa-Woloska. The advance-guard deployed and opened a scattered fire upon us. The Jews in the inn all bolted, leaving their pots on the fire and the goods on the counter as booty to the famished soldiers. I like to think that this was vengeance for their wine at five crowns! The Russian guns began to play on our troops holding Zagorz. The shells passed well above our heads, and for the time we could afford to laugh at them.

About 3 o’clock the detachment of the 21st left us again. Our task was to hold the line of the San at all

costs. Our artillery began to reply, and its first shell fell among us, wounding one of our men ; but afterwards they reached the Russians all right. The duel lasted until the evening, while, unobserved, we dug our holes and manned our 3,000-metre front. Once more I found myself in the most exposed position at the end of the village near the confluence of the two rivers. I took up my abode with a Ruthenian, and slept peacefully until midnight, after having enjoined the sentries and patrols to keep a careful and conscientious watch.

*November 9th.*

Fighting lasted all day. The Cossacks had dismounted and attacked along the whole front. Two sotnias advanced over the open towards the village of Bykowce, but we mowed them down, with the assistance of the rest of the battalion. The Russians came up to within three to four hundred paces of us and opened concentrated fire, but we were very scattered, and had only three or four men wounded. This time our shrapnel was well aimed. We heard the cries of the wounded. They wept just like our peasants.

Towards evening I expected an order to retire, as our advanced position was impossible to hold. But the Major told us to keep a sharp look-out as the Russians would try to cross the San in the night.

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At half-past ten the order to withdraw arrived—two hours late. Another hour, and it would have been all over with us. I left a squad behind us with orders to keep up a continuous fire on the Russian position, and we slunk off in tense silence. Our sappers were just about to fire the train under the bridge over the Oslava at the village of Zagorz. I shouted out to them to wait, and we went over the bridge like the wind. We passed through Tarnawa and marched to Serednie, which we reached at six in the morning. This was more than human endurance could stand. We went to pieces, with our Colonel Maetze at the head. The troops got mixed up, and we marched on like sleep-walkers. From 1 to 3 a.m. it was torture, and the men slept bolt upright. Some fell flat and slept where they fell. Dead horses and sleep-besotted men shared the ditches. In one wood we found men asleep, upright against the trees. No caricaturist's fantasy could have invented more grotesque poses. In addition to weariness, the men were a prey to hunger. For three days we had seen no bread and had had to subsist on potatoes. Oh, blessed plant! Blessed be he that brought you among us!

*November 10th.*

I slept until the afternoon in a peasant's house incredibly dirty. The men slept in the stables. About 4 p.m. we left for Chocen, where we passed the night. We had

lost touch with the head of the column. In the darkness three companies and a-half were all that remained of us, and no one knew whither the battalion was bound. We asked some peasants if they had seen anything of "our lot," but they refused to converse with us. We turned them out of their homes at the bayonet's point and made one man conduct us to the Baligrod road. At length we found a hussar who was looking for our Brigade. We opened his orders and found that the Brigade was at Lahoczewie, which we reached at 11 at night. The men were lighting fires under the open sky, and we officers herded together in a house which was already occupied by the N.C.O.'s of a mountain battery—rough, bearded Czechs, who paid no heed to our officers' stars.

Vermin still worried us, and their inroads on our sleep were steadily increasing. Misery only made us savage and brutal.

*November 11th.*

The weather was kind to us. I was able to buy from some peasants two pigs and some potatoes for the company; 112 rolls were handed out, and we lived like princes. The soldiers did their own cooking, and this day of rest and food made us happy.

This evening, in the hospitable home of a wealthy peasant, a rare phenomenon in Galicia, I came across a novelty—two ikons, reproduced in colour, representing

the Holy Maid and Jesus Christ in popular costume. The Mother of God wore a veil on her head, drawn down over the forehead and falling in folds over her shoulders—exactly like those of the peasantry. The hem of the veil was trimmed at the edge exactly like our veils in the Sebes and Orastie districts. The smock had the embroidered collar and wristbands of our Roumanian smocks. The Christ wore a peasant's smock, open at the throat, embroidered, and with wide, loose sleeves. Our attempt at national art in our cathedral at Sibiiu was thus neither new nor an isolated example.

My host and Lieutenant Szinte were amazed at my interest in such things in war time. . . . Yet I found them a distraction, objects of beauty and artistic significance which fed my hungry soul.\*

*November 12th.*

Lieutenant Szinte has always remained a gendarme. Didn't he take it into his head to-day to inspect the men's packs? And he secured a splendid harvest! He found a tablecloth and six napkins on a gypsy soldier, a woman's corsets and shoes on another, a lace blouse on a third, some jewellery on a Saxon, and so on. He

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\* M. Taslăuanu, besides being secretary of the *Association for Roumanian Culture in Hungary*, was for twelve years principal editor of the review, "*Luceafăr*," which carried weight in the movement of Roumanian Letters. Here he gave, along with reproductions of selected works of art, articles designed to popularise Art among the Transylvanians.

punished them all, and told us with clumsy glee how they bellowed under the blows rained on them at his orders by a sergeant with a whip which had also been discovered in a pack. What about the psychology of our Szinte? . . . The men hated him mortally.

About 9 o'clock we returned to Chocen. A General made us occupy the heights which dominate the Baligrod road, and we were alarmed at the prospect of further fighting. Fortunately we were spared this. With my company I was posted in support of a mountain battery cleverly concealed. The Captain of this battery, a Czech, gave me a friendly reception and asked me to supper. I noticed a camaraderie among these artillerymen which we never knew. They regaled us on Prague ham and fine old wine. Late in the evening, a Lieutenant-Colonel turned up, soft and sallow, whom the Captain, a man of high intelligence, seemed inclined to treat patronisingly. The little man went off to sleep after informing us that our mission was to hold up the Russians until concrete trenches in the Carpathians were ready.

*November 13th.*

At an order from our Major we left for Wyszoczany by Serednie-Kulaszne-Kozuszne. As we left Chocen we encountered some Russians made prisoner in the fighting at Hoczen on the San.

It was a magnificent day. The frost on the grass was like silver. The dry leaves made the trees rustle. We were told we were being sent home.

We marched hard, and at Kulaszne rejoined the battalion. Tears came to my eyes when I saw a railway train again. It was most moving to think that after so much suffering, so many hours spent in the presence of death, we were returning alive and in peace to our homes in Ardéal.

But we passed through Wyszoczany, and in the distance heavy fighting could be heard. And *we* were the reserve. At 4 o'clock we took the high road for Rzepedz. We had to struggle with the stream of artillery and convoys. Second Lieutenant Fux was taken ill and left us, so that I remained the only officer in the company.

This day we covered forty kilometres, and on reaching Rzepedz at nightfall we were given orders to occupy the heights to the north. We were almost mad with disappointed rage. Not one of us felt fit for any more duty, especially as a chilly wind was blowing and fine rain fell and seemed to pierce us to the bone. But it was only the unhappy 9th and 12th Companies which had to go up. The 10th and 11th remained in billets in the village. The men lit fires with anything they could lay their hands on.

We officers entered a house in which was a young woman with two children. Her smock was black, her

clothes were in rags, her face and hair showed that she had been neither washed nor combed for weeks. On seeing us she retired behind the stove, pressing her two children, dirty as herself, to her side. She looked at us with every mark of terror, her eyes the haggard and motionless orbs of a maniac. By the light of the candles which we lit she presented a picture of a Madonna of misery such as I shall never forget. We slept there, huddled together, a mass of dirt and lice, and broken with fatigue.

*November 14th.*

We received orders to hold the village church. It was a fine one, like all these Galician churches, built with Russian money. We were told that under the altar of certain churches were concealed machine-guns sent from Russia in peace time to serve as candelabra. Whenever we fought in a village we always knew that we should be machine-gunned from the church tower.

In the afternoon, fresh orders—to go down and defend Rzepedz bridge. It was nightfall before we got there, and our troops were in full retreat. We held the place long enough for the bridge to be blown up, and then we drove off two patrols of Cossacks, scattered by our fire. After an hour we left, marching like the wind. More bridges went up behind us, and we hastened on. The post of danger was ever our lot. When we were



advancing, it was we poor Territorials who were thrust into first line, and now *we* were employed to cover the retreat out of this cursed Galicia.

Near Komanza we rejoined our battalion and by a superhuman effort continued our march all night. I slept as I went, calling out: "Onward the 11th," while we sped backwards with might and main.

Sometimes a man stumbled, the others bumped into him, and the whole column stopped while men fell in a heap in the mud. Such occurrences were by no means uncommon. I had my turn full length in a ditch. Under my head I felt the rough hair of a haversack and thought it must be attached to some fallen soldier, but when I got up I discovered it was a dead horse. It was between one and three especially that the march became absolute torture. We dragged ourselves along like drunkards.

When, after threading many paths, we found the frontier posts at the top of a hill, we all made the sign of the Cross and shouted with joy. For the first time in my life, I, of all people, was glad to find myself on the soil of Hungary.

*November 15th.*

Palota. I slept the whole day. The men lay down in the mud. In the evening we were sent up to a hill. All the houses were occupied. I received the company's pay—3,000 crowns. The men had not seen a sou since

the 1st of October. Two new officers joined us here—Kugel, from the Supply Branch, and a Roumanian, Svetcu, a lawyer from Mercurea.

We undressed and went to sleep. But we had hardly gone off before the alarm was given. We had to start once more for Galicia, in the cold and darkness, by horrible roads. We had no idea what our destiny was, and a kind of rage seized us to run away or put a bullet through our brains.

Some evil fate hovered over us, forbidding us ever to see Ardéal again.

## THE FIGHTING IN THE CARPATHIANS

*November 16th.*

THE fighting in the Carpathians, thanks to the difficulties of the ground and the severity of the season, demanded the greatest effort and suffering of which our Army was ever capable. Those who have not taken part in it can have no idea of what a human being is capable. The resources of vital energy accumulated in our organism are simply prodigious. In particular, our Roumanian soldiers compelled the admiration of all by their fortitude. This quality in this country of mountains and winter made them first-rate troops. The great Napoleon said : “ La première qualité du soldat est la constance à supporter la fatigue et la privation. La pauvreté, les privations et la misère sont l'école du bon soldat.”

You can bet we did our schooling all right, even going so far as the examinations . . . and if the bold Corsican had been with us and we had had an ideal to defend, we should certainly have been reckoned picked troops in spite of our faults. But our leaders were anything but Napoleons, though, as a matter of fact, the Major of the 22nd Territorials rejoiced in the name of Napoleon. I have no opinion about his military ability, as I was

never close to him, but I never heard of him distinguishing himself in any action.

November 17th.

We had some frightful news this morning. The fighting Hungarian Lieutenant Szinte's company had been scattered, and he himself had bolted at top speed, thereby crushing one of his feet and taking all the skin off his nose. Michaelis, the bookseller, had gone forward with fifty men to a wooded height. A few men of my company, including Sergeant Corusa, told me that they saw some thirty Russians stealing away in front of their line. They began to call out "Feuer einstellen—Tüzet szüntes" ("Cease fire!"). At this double command, in German and Hungarian, our men got up and left their shelter behind the trees. Then the Russians were heard to whisper: "Brzo, brzo!" ("Quick, quick!"), and they fired rapidly on our poor simpletons and then bolted. In a few seconds we had only dead and wounded left, for hardly fifteen came back untouched. Poor Michaelis, hit in the left shoulder by a bullet which came out the other side, was killed and buried on the frontier. A Roumanian stretcher-bearer laid him on straw at the bottom of a trench and recited a *paternoster* over him. That was a real good soul, in a man devoted to his duty. God rest it. His brother, the engineer, had had his forehead scraped by a bullet. Two other officers had been seriously wounded.

I was left alone, of all those who had left Fàgàras with the battalion. Michaelis, my last companion, had just left me for ever.

In the afternoon I took fifty men to hold a slope covered with juniper trees. The men hastily dug trenches, and I manufactured a shelter of boughs and branches. Once more it snowed, and there was no question of making fires.

*November 18th.*

Everything was wrapped in a mantle of snow, whose virginal whiteness soothed us and made our thoughts turn calmly to death, which we longed for as never before. The men dug coffin-shaped trenches, so that when in the evening I went to inspect them lying in these ditches covered with juniper, they looked to me as if they had been buried alive. Poor Roumanians!

*November 20th.*

An unforgettable day. I doubt if fiction has ever recorded scenes more comic, and yet more interesting, than those of November 20th.

First, a description of the situation is necessary.

We were holding the hills between the road from Radoszyce in Hungary and that which passes through Dolzyca to the frontier. The *terrain* was very uneven

and thickly wooded. Here and there a clearing or meadow could be seen, though even these were invaded by junipers. The line of our positions was prolonged over the wooded height opposite us, so that we had to fire to our left straight through the woods without seeing anything. The reports of our patrols did not enable us to get any very clear idea of the extent of our front, so Major Paternos and I went out to confirm their news from the spot.

The forest began in face of us, thirty or forty paces down the slope. We made our way into it and reached a stream. On the other side of the stream the woods became thicker, and we could get up the slope only with the assistance of projecting tufts and branches. Beyond the top we found a battalion, about 300 strong, of the 47th Infantry. They had all gone to ground, and their Captain showed us, thirty paces away, the crest covered with junipers, and told us: "The Russians are there." But the undergrowth was so thick that nothing could be seen and no one could get through. This Captain was in despair, feeling that he had no chance of getting away. We understood it. His situation was very difficult. We shivered even as we listened.

Our sector was broken on the right, but on our left, three hundred paces off, the next sector had good trenches, which wound round in a bend to the Dolzyca road. The gaps were due to our lack of men.

In the morning the 12th Company was on duty. Mine rested in shelters in the woods, and we were served out with bread, tinned stuffs, winter underclothes, boots—even children's elastic slippers—and other luxuries.

The men, cold or no cold, lost no time in undressing to change their linen. I then saw human bodies which were nothing but one great sore from the neck to the waist. They were absolutely eaten up with lice. For the first time I really understood the popular phrase "May the lice eat you!" One of the men, when he pulled off his shirt, tore away crusts of dried blood, and the vermin were swarming in filthy layers in the garment. The poor peasant had grown thin on this. His projecting jaws and sunken eyes were the most conspicuous features of him. Even we officers were regular hives. Fothi yesterday counted fifty. He pulled them one by one from the folds of his shirt collar. He counted them, threw them in the fire, and while we drank our tea and smoked, we scratched ourselves and laughed.

About midday I decided to change also. I began by washing, for I was filthy and black. From the time of our arrival at Laszki-Murowane, six weeks before, I had not known what it was to wash my mouth. The post had brought me from Hungary a tooth-brush and some paste. What a joy once more to have white teeth and a clean mouth! In one's daily life at home one cannot imagine that such pleasures can exist. One thing at least

war teaches us—to appreciate as never before the pleasures of peace !

I had just put on my shirts again—I always wore two or three—when I heard a shout from all sides : “ The Russians are on us ! ” Private Torna came to our shelter to announce : “ Sir, the Russians are breaking through our line on the top ! ” I did not yet believe it, but, at any cost, I asked my friend Fothi to conduct the company to the trenches. Meanwhile I hastily put on my boots, took my rifle, and rejoined the company as it was emerging from the wood.

There I stopped. I could hardly believe my eyes. What was it I saw ? Along the whole front, the Russians and our men were in contact, staring at, threatening (with bayonets fixed), shouting at, and, in places, blazing away at each other.

Among the junipers, near to the trench we had dug three days back, the Russians and our men were scrambling together, fighting and kicking, around a supply of bread intended for the 12th Company. This struggle of starving animals for food only lasted a few seconds. They all got up, each man having at least a fragment of bread, which he devoured voraciously.

With a rapid glance I counted the Russians. They were not more numerous than ourselves, and I saw them drag our men away one by one by pulling at the corners of their blankets—for our shepherds had turned their



blankets into overcoats. One or two of them, a little more knowing than the rest, unfastened these coverings and, with a shake of the shoulders, left them in the hands of the Russians. The latter, well content with their prize, went their way laughing, while our men came back to us. I thought to myself that, after all, it could not be much worse in Siberia than it was here.

Some of the Russians now tried to surround us. One raw young recruit came quite close up to us and raised his rifle at me. I held mine to the ready in response. It was a thrilling moment. I don't know what it was, but something in my look prevented him from firing, and I too refrained. He took to his heels and fled. But the shock had been too much for me, and, like a savage, I yelled in a fury: "Disarm them!" I threw myself on to the group nearest to us, and Fothi and I together wrenched the rifles out of the hands of the two Russian soldiers. They all surrendered forthwith like lambs. We took sixty of them. All our men wished to escort the prisoners. I selected three as a guard, the third to walk behind and carry the Russian's rifle. I was obliged to have recourse to threats before I could induce them to enter the trench, and I then marched them off in file to the Commander-in-Chief.

And this is how bread, holy bread, reconciles men, not only in the form of Communion before the holy altar, but even on the field of battle. The peasants, who, in

their own homes, whether in Russia or elsewhere, sweat blood in order to ensure the ripening of the golden ear of corn which is to feed their masters, once they are on the battlefield forget the behests of these masters who have sent them forth to murder their fellows, and they make peace over a scrap of bread. The bread which they have produced and harvested makes them brothers. After this scene not a single shot disturbed the forest, and those who had been able to preserve a whole loaf, quickly shared it brotherly fashion with the prisoners, the latter offering them tobacco in exchange. All this, of course, took place in front of our bivouacs in the heart of the forest.

I sent Fothi to the Major to ask for reinforcements, as I was expecting a second attack. The prisoners told me that the Russians had come about four hundred strong. I did not have long to wait. An hour later, on the edge of the wood, a party of Russians appeared. They were standing with their rifles at the slope, beckoning to us to approach. One of our men left his party and came to tell us that the Russians wished to surrender, but that we ought to surround them. It was no doubt a fresh ruse. A quarter of an hour before I had sent out a patrol of two men—a Roumanian and a Saxon—and they had not returned. The Roumanian had surrendered and the Saxon had been killed. My reinforcements arrived, sixty men of the 10th Company, under

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Second Lieutenant Szöllösy, the man who was always the best hand at cursing and belabouring our Roumanians. I sent his sergeant-major, a brutal and thoroughly repellent Saxon, together with twenty men, to the right to surround the Russians. I certainly doomed them to death. I reckoned that if the Russians wished to surrender they would not wait for us to surround them first. They would lay down their arms and give themselves up. On the other hand, if they did fire on our men, all who had gone out to the corner of the forest would fall victims. But calculations are all very fine; on the field of battle they are apt to be misleading.

Surrender was the last thing in the world that the Russians against whom our men were advancing with fixed bayonets had in mind. I went over the top, clambering over the body of a man whose brains were sticking out of his head, and signed to them to surrender—they were at most 200 yards away. But they still continued to call to us without attempting to move. I thereupon gave the command, “Fire!” and held my own rifle at the ready. At this point my calculations broke down. My Roumanians refused to fire, and, what was more, prevented me from firing either. One of them put his hand on my rifle and said :

“Don’t fire, sir; if we fire, they will fire too. . . . And why should Roumanians kill Roumanians?” (He was thinking of the Bessarabians.)

I accordingly refrained, but, beside myself with rage, tried to rejoin my right wing, where incredible things were happening. The schoolmaster Catavei and Cizmas barred my way, exclaiming: "Stop, don't go and get yourself shot, too!"

Our men were advancing towards the Russians, and, with their arms at the slope, were shaking hands with them; and the fraternising business started again.

"Surrender, and we will surrender, too. We're quite ready."

Our men were bringing in Russians, and *vice versa*. It was a touching sight.

I saw one of my Roumanians, towards Saliste, kiss a Russian and bring him back. Their arms were round each other's necks as though they were brothers. They were old friends, who had been shepherd boys together in Bessarabia.

We took ninety Russians as prisoners in this way; whilst they took thirty of our men.

But this was not the last of the adventures of that wonderful day.

I was afraid of a third attack. A Moldavian from Bessarabia, noticing what a handful we were, said to me: "If we had known there were so few of you we should have gone for you with sticks."

I again applied to the Major for reinforcements and a machine-gun. As it happened, he had just called up

a company of the 96th Infantry Regiment ; they arrived almost immediately—125 men, under Lieutenant Petras—and went to lengthen our right wing. As for me, the Major sent me to a bank on the left, to direct two machine-guns where to fire in order to cut off the retreat of those Russians who had remained in the wood. I had hardly advanced a hundred yards before I heard a shout of “Hurrah !” in my sector. I called out to the Major to find out what it meant, and went on. In a hollow I found a field officer—unfortunately, I have forgotten his name—who sent a lieutenant to accompany me to the machine-guns. But it was a Russian machine-gun that welcomed us as soon as we reached the trenches. The bullets whizzed by, thick and fast. One grazed my leg, another came within a hand’s-breadth of my head. The Russians employ detachments of snipers, who creep into advanced positions and pick off officers only. Major Paternos had the fingers of his left hand shot off in his observation post. They are wonderful shots. I showed my respect for them by not leaving the trench until nightfall, when I returned to my sector.

Lieutenant Petras had attacked the Russians in the wood. That was the meaning of the cheers I had heard, of which the most patent result was the reduction of the relieving company of the 96ths to twenty-five men. Those who had entered the wood never returned, and had certainly fallen a prey to the Russians.

Once again I had escaped the dangers of that fateful day, which the Commander-in-Chief assured us, in a special Army Order, would be inscribed on the page of history.

Our scrap with the Russians may have been extremely comic, but at least we had held our positions—and that alone was a victory. We had been allotted the task of keeping the crest, from which, if they had been able to seize it, the Russians would have threatened our line in the rear and on the flank ; and we had fulfilled it. Major Paternos told us to draw up a list of the men who had distinguished themselves. We all received the second-class medal for valour, and three officers—Fothi, Szöllösy and myself—were also awarded the *Signum Laudis* bar. The Hungarian deserved it perhaps least of any of us. He was not even present when we took the prisoners ; but he had the impudence to go to the Major and declare, in front of us all, that it was he who captured the first Russian.

*November 21st.*

Reinforcements arrived to-night—one battalion of the 47th Regiment of Infantry, under Captain Schönhofer, a fine figure of a man. His companies consisted of about fifty men—the strength of a platoon. After we had shown him the positions and explained the situation, we returned to our dug-outs, but fear of a night attack

prevented us from closing an eyelid. We drank mug after mug of tea and coffee, and smoked innumerable cigarettes. Oh, those days—and nights! We often smoked 100 cigarettes a day and drank as many as twenty-five cups of tea. It was our only means of distraction. Life in the trenches, above all, is trying at night on account of the cold; the two hours of duty seem never-ending. We light one cigarette from the last, holding them in our hands. As for the unfortunate privates, they have to stay from eight to twelve hours in their dug-outs. And all night long the bullets from the Russian sentinels hail down upon them. We have adopted their system, which experience has proved to be practical. At first we used to post sentinels beyond the parapet, but stray shots wounded two or three of them. So now they remain in the trench and fire turn and turn, about every half-minute. This keeps the sentinels awake and makes the task of the superior officers easier, besides disturbing the enemy.

But we get no rest. Even under the trees round about our dug-outs we are no safer. Day and night the bullets fly, and often enough reach a mark. One cannot leave one's hut without exposing oneself. Moreover, we are continually on the jump. A sleep of more than two or three hours is unknown.

And now to-day, just as we were in the middle of telling each other our impressions of yesterday's adventures,

lo and behold! shrapnel shells started falling into the wood. They burst a long way off, but made such a din that one would have thought the *Mother of the Woods*\* was at our heels.

The men in my sector belong to the Territorial regiments of Ardéal. We had remained mixed up with them ever since the fight of the 16th November. I have already mentioned that the 21st had no overcoats. To-day I saw one of them coming back from the wood with a cloak frozen stiff. He had taken it from a body in front of our trench, and wanted to get leave to thaw it and wear it.

They say that Kralitschek, on our left, is attacking the Russians. If we are attacking, it is a bad look-out.

*November 22nd.*

Early this morning we were ordered to distribute all the rations, of which we had plenty. We knew that this meant a retreat.

The rifles which we had taken from the Russian prisoners were leaning against a tree, and their ammunition was heaped up in piles. The question was, what to do with them. We could not allow them to fall into the hands of the enemy again. I had a ditch dug, and we smashed the rifles and laid them, together with the ammunition, to eternal rest. At the head of the mound

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\*A folklore character.



we planted a cross made of branches, in order to deceive the Russians. Everybody congratulated me on this brilliant idea. As to the butts of the rifles, we set fire to them. I'm sure I don't know where the wood they were made of came from, but they flared up most wonderfully.

In the afternoon a rumour went round that Kralitschek had not succeeded in repulsing the Russians. In the evening we received orders to cheer all along the firing line because Hindenburg had surrounded the Russian Army in Poland on a front of fifteen miles. We, of course, kept as silent as the dead, in order not to reveal the poverty of our numbers. But on our right we could hear the shouting.

At midnight came the order to retreat to Vidrany in Hungary. We made a bee-line across the wood in the dark. At the express command of my Major, I, together with my company, broke off from the rest and followed a certain path. It was indeed rough going. Close by, the 61st Infantry Regiment was also in retreat. The slopes were very slippery, and it was up and down all the way. The men fell down, sprained their ankles and remained where they were. I am afraid many must have frozen to death. Near Vidrany we came down a slope lying on the ground and allowing ourselves to slide down. Some, more canny than the rest, sat on their rifles and toboganned to the bottom.

*November 23rd.*

Near the Vidrany road we rejoined Major Paternos, who had only a few pioneers and stretcher-bearers with him. We continued our march as far as Mezö-Laborcz, which we reached at 6 a.m., all of us dead beat. We took up our quarters at the well-appointed but deserted house of a business woman called Schönfeld Iona, and there rested till our other companies came up. The men found casks of wine and brandy in the cellar, and, bringing them out and filling up their canteens with liquor, began drinking. They all got drunk.

As soon as the other companies arrived we set off again in the direction of Laborczfö, two miles away. But the men were all so drunk they could not walk. Not far from the station there was a train laden with military equipment. Men from every regiment began to plunder it, and our men, too, made a rush for the booty.

We went into billets, but two hours later réveillé was sounded, and what remained of our 23rd Territorial Regiment was attached as a single battalion to the 1st Honved Regiment of Budapest, under Lieutenant-Colonel Reviczky.

We occupied the hills to the west, which overlook the village of Laborcz. We began to dig, but the frozen soil was as hard as iron. Fortunately, there was no dearth of tools for the men. At the beginning of the war they

used to throw away their spades without a moment's hesitation—they had one between two—but necessity taught them the importance of these implements.

The rifle and the spade are indispensable to the soldier. I would even advise all officers going to the front to sling a spade instead of a sword to their belts; they will certainly find it more useful.

One or two Saxons built a splendid trench, with an oven and a chimney, and covered the whole with planks and branches of juniper. As it appeared to be the best, I selected it for my own quarters. One of the men, a well-to-do and intelligent peasant from Cismadia, was called *Deutschländer*; the other was a commercial traveller for a Vienna firm; the rest were peasants and small tradesmen from the neighbourhood of Sibiu. I began to doze, and they all talked in whispers in order not to disturb me. I listened to them as if in a dream. They discussed the situation, and appeared to be very much annoyed over our constant retreat. They seemed to have a rather poor opinion of the Austro-Hungarian Army.

“If we were led by Germans, things would go very differently.”

They were of opinion that it was all up with the Empire.

“If the Russians enter Hungary,” muttered one of them, “Roumania will join in the war too.”

“And after all we wouldn’t much mind if the Roumanians did rule us. We know the Roumanian. We should be just as free as we are in Hungary, and we should still keep all the business in our own hands.

Just as a Saxon from Turnisor pronounced these words, I looked up and joined in the conversation.

“Very true, my lads ; but it is your bosses who are afraid of the Roumanians.”

“Our bosses ? . . . they are the same as yours,” rejoined another, calmly ; and from his gesture I gathered that he did not wish to offend me.

The cold that night was enough to freeze a brass monkey.

*November 24th.*

At dawn the Russians appeared. They left the woods and came down before Laborcz. At first there was only a company of them, doubtless an advance guard, covered by sharpshooters on their left flank. Soon, behind them, a whole regiment appeared. I telegraphed to the Honved batteries a little to the rear to open fire ; but some considerable time afterwards a subaltern appeared and told me that they had no shells.

“But what are you doing there, then ? ”

“Obeying orders.”

“To the devil with your orders and the whole lot of you ! ” I thought.

I had never had such a good view of the Russian method of advancing in skirmishing order. They were now 3,000 yards away. We were only waiting for them to come within range, and the attention with which we watched them may be imagined. The Russian method is as follows: One man from the centre of the line takes a few paces forward, and two others, one from each end of the line, advance on either side of him. The three thus point the front which has to be occupied. Then the whole front advances in open formation, each man at some distance from his neighbour, and never more than six at a time. They advance in this way by platoons. Sometimes the leaders do not wait for the others to come up, but proceed to a new line. The disadvantage of this manœuvre—which has now been adopted in the Austro-Hungarian Army too—is the slowness of its development; but it has compensating features which far outweigh its disadvantages. In the first place, there are never more than five or six men to be seen standing, and these are so far apart that they make difficult targets. Secondly, the Russians never advance in a straight line. In each group of two men, one is always some paces to the rear of the other, and the front thus presented is irregular. This, I believe, prevents the machine-guns from mowing down whole lines at a time. The officers bring up the rear. Experience has shown that it is a mistake to make officers lead, for the officer is able to

control and regulate the advance better from behind. At the beginning of the war our officers led at the head of their men, and half-way found themselves practically alone. The men had either hidden themselves or become scattered and mingled with other units. The officer in the rear is less exposed. It has often been said that men lose their heads when they lose their officers. But when the officer is behind his front he remains *master* of his unit. He has them there under his eyes. I don't want to be misunderstood. The duties of an officer behind the front are not less strenuous than when in the front line, because they do not imply idleness or negligence. As I have said elsewhere, an officer *must* take an active part in the fighting.

We marched through a huge forest to Hocra, where the Command of the Twentieth Division was stationed. We only got there late at night, and our strength had dwindled to a quarter of what we had at the start. Our little Budapest gentlemen had littered the road like flies. Many of them remained behind in the woods, weeping, and no one bothered about them. Some of our veterans had dropped behind, too. It was by the mercy of God if they escaped the frost and the wolves.

*November 25th.*

All these villages of the Galician frontier were crammed with Jewish refugees from the Galician frontier. We

found rooms filled by thirty to forty persons, men, women, little girls, children, and, of course, a seasoning of soldiers, all sleeping together in a heap. It is difficult to imagine a more complete picture of misery.

Our numbers were so seriously reduced that we were obliged to form two companies, a half-battalion, the last unit which preserved its individual supply arrangements, for although we were attached to the 1st Regiment of Honveds, we were messed by ourselves. Here my company was dissolved, as it had now only the strength of a platoon, of which I was still the Commander. There were only two officers with precedence over me, and both of these were Hungarians—Szinte and Szöllösy—so that in spite of the regret of my men and the indignation of many of my friends, I still remained a subaltern.

The dispersion of my company was the last straw. I made up my mind to say good-bye to battlefields, as I was nothing but a shadow and it was all I could do to drag myself along.

*November 27th.*

At night we returned to Havaj. We left early for Stropka-Polena in a thick mist, cold and penetrating. Marching was a difficult business, for the men were worn out.

At Polena, a halt. But Austrian bureaucracy could not even leave us alone in the field. We had to get out a return of all the men's belongings which were missing, and ever would be. What was there that our poor fellows did not lack? Everything they had on them was in rags, and filthy beyond words. Lice swarmed over them like bees in a hive. Most of them were barefooted, and had wrapped up their feet in rags tied round their tattered socks. The feet of many were terribly torn and sore, but it was useless for them to go to the doctors. Strict orders had been issued that only those half dead should be admitted to hospital. One of our men remained in action for two weeks with his left arm broken by a piece of shrapnel, so he said. He was actually afraid to go to the doctor. There was, in fact, no question that the bone of his forearm was broken, but no flesh wound was to be seen.

About midday we once more took the north-west road for Galicia. We climbed hills which had been well ploughed by Russian artillery. To get through a wood we had to swing by the trees. At the top we were stopped by Colonel Gombosh. It was useless to tell him that we had our Major's orders to occupy another hill. He would not hear of it. He needed a reserve, and we must stay. Shells of all kinds fell thick and fast in the forest, and there was violent fighting everywhere, the swish of machine-gun bullets being conspicuous.



Colonel Gombosh sent Szinte to take a house about 1,000 metres behind the Russian front line. Then he showed me a knoll from which I was to watch for his return and shoot his company wholesale if he returned with it. We then began to realise that we were dealing with one who had lost his wits. But Szinte's men went off to the Russian trenches—and few of them came back.

Night fighting in forests, where it is almost impossible to see even in daytime, has something quite unreal about it. All is confusion, and fear reigns supreme. Only the flashes can be seen, and it is by them that the enemy, his strength and position, can be seen. Group fights with group. Often enough you come upon your enemy from behind without knowing that it is your enemy. I once met a lieutenant whose cap was absolutely cut up at the back. He had got up to the Russians, crawling at full length. Bullets had sliced through his clothes. But he had come, dragging himself along from tree to tree.

The men passed the night in a wide trench, dug specially for the reserve, and I myself sheltered behind a tree, shivering with cold. The bullets struck the tree-trunks with a sound like the cracking of a whip. We heard that the Russians were using explosive bullets. The minute you got up or moved from your protecting tree, you were gambling with your life. It was indeed a night of horror. At two o'clock in the morning certain platoons

received an order to fix bayonets and drive the Russians from a trench. They approached, sent out scouts ahead, and found the trench full of the—24th Territorials! They were within an ace of executing their orders and killing every single occupant. The Colonel's information was defective. The trench had been only partly occupied by the Russians, and was actually held both by our men and them. In fact they had been having a shooting-match down the same communication trench. In the morning we returned to Havaj.

*November 28th.*

We went back to the trenches. Towards five o'clock in the afternoon the Russians were at Stropko-Polena. They bade us good-night by sending over four shells, which burst round the village church. We did trench duty that night, relieving each other every two hours.

In the night one of our patrols brought us in three Russian soldiers, well-clad, healthy young men, two of whom were Russians, the third a Jew, "master of the Hebrew tongue." I can't say where he came from. It was he who had persuaded the others to surrender. I have noticed several times during this war that there are always Jews amongst men who give themselves up. I say this without any hatred against Jews, a sentiment I have never felt—but it is a fact I have proved many

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times. In the firing line they often persuade the Russians to surrender. In our own lines it is very much the same, only, instead of giving themselves up to the enemy, they desert. I believe that Jews have a demoralising influence in armies. I can remember one case of a brave Jew which made a great impression on me. But my experience is that they have no sense of duty, and exceptions do not change my opinion, which has been formed by much experience.

Our popular Major Paternos left us at last. He got poisoning in the wound on his hand and had a sharp fever. That night I felt ill myself: I was reduced to skin and bones—I could hardly stand up. I had had quite enough of soldiering, and so made up my mind to go.

. . . . .

*November 29th.*

In the morning with tears in my eyes I said good-bye to my men. Then, having gone through all the formalities, I walked as far as Bukocz and drove to Eperjes in two days, and from there took the last train to Budapest. Both Eperjes and Cassorie were empty of inhabitants. I was the last officer of the unit who had started out with the battalion from Făgăras and had left the fighting area. After myself there was none left but Dr. Schuller.

Of our regiment of more than 3,500 men I had left only 170 at Havaj. Of the 11th Company, which had left Fàgàras 267 strong, only five now remained, and six counting myself.

God had willed that I should return alive.

. . . . .

## “HOME AGAIN”

“HOME!” What a wonderful word, and what a depth of meaning it holds in days like these. My own fireside—the house in which I am my own master, to come and go just as I please! You must have led a wandering life, to have been without fire or roof, and surrounded by all the horrors of war, to understand fully the joy of living with a ceiling over you and a bed under you; the luxury of eating off a table, washing every day, and having a warm corner by the fire to sit in peacefully at nights, secure in the knowledge that you will be alive the next day—and the day after.

I came back to my house in Sibiu with tears in my eyes—and, like a child, wandered from room to room looking at my books, my pictures, and all my things—I touched them with loving fingers, and even kissed some. When in fact, after all these months, I found myself in my bathroom, in my warm bedroom, and my own comfortable bed, the wide world could not have shown a happier or more contented man than I.

. . . . .

I had no idea I was so ill. My friends and acquaintances were shocked when they saw me. The Honved doctor of Sibiiu, without even looking at me, granted me eight days' leave. After this I had three weeks more and then seven in hospital.

My rheumatics refused to leave me, but for all sufferers of melancholia I prescribe the great war cure! I, who before August, 1914, had believed myself to have every ailment under the sun, was now perfectly cured!

When I came back I had counted on having four weeks of rest, pure and simple. But what I saw in Sibiiu decided me to take the supreme decision.

The town was full of officers, especially regulars, who only played at soldiering. They loafed in cafés, drinking hard, and fooling about with women. I also found others sitting in offices who thought of nothing but their own promotion, and had never even seen a battlefield. These were the richer ones, who possessed money and influence. They looked with a kind of pity on simpletons like us, who risked our skins for patriotism. They were all Hungarians, Jews, and Armenians. Our indignation—they actually called us "the heroes" in mockery—knew no bounds when we found ourselves once more posted to march companies, while these Regular officers continued to defend their country amongst their women and their cafés.

I had for a long time decided never to fight under a strange flag and for a cause alien to our national interests. In August I went from a sense of duty without reckoning on what awaited me. Now I know all about it, there is not a power in the world strong enough to drag me back into the Austrian battle line. I am ready for anything.

. . . . .

Before I was ill I had had news of Roumania. It was said that the Kingdom was also going to join in. All the Roumanians of Hungary, especially the peasantry, were waiting for the sacred day of deliverance—waiting in silence for the day when the first *dorobantz*\* should cross the border-line into Ardéal on to the soil of Great Roumania.

We waited in vain. The fortunate citizens of free Roumania did not know and could not understand what it is “to wait,” to watch day after day each small event, to discuss and thrash out the most trivial items, to endure humiliation, misery, contempt, and to shed your blood for the tyrant whom you loathe.

. . . . .

In February I came out of hospital and was sent to the depot, to the reserve battalion, where training was resumed. The organisation of this battalion was complicated. The *cadres* of Territorials were combined with Honveds. The recovered wounded, recruits, and men

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\* Roumanian infantrymen.

returned from leave formed several reserve companies, varying in strength from three to four hundred men. These companies in their turn formed march companies, of which four or five were always kept ready for anything, and they were composed of the fittest men without any regard to age. There were about two hundred men in them, never more, who were newly equipped from head to feet. Rifles were handed out to them *en route* because there were none left in Sibiiu.

I was put into the second reserve company, which was entirely composed of elderly Territorials. It had six half-companies of two or three hundred men each. The numbers were continually varying. The recruits went through a more detailed course by themselves. We ourselves went through various fighting exercises, without arms, deploying in skirmishing lines, attacking in the Russian mode, digging trenches and shelters. I can assure you that the Austrian system had undergone substantial modification ! . . .

My company was almost exclusively composed of Roumanians of the 23rd Honveds, from the counties of Sibiiu, Făgăraș, and Hunedoara. I found two of my former comrades who had been wounded. When I tapped them on the shoulder and held out my hand I could see the pleasure in their faces. It was a long time since they had seen a Roumanian officer. I got very friendly with these good fellows, and one night, when I managed to get



them by themselves, I told them the epic of Michael the Brave.\*

When I finished, they leaned towards me to ask, with tears in their eyes :

“ But, sir, how long will this cursed servitude go on ? The folks over there make no sign, and yet it’s all one. If we have to die, we might just as well die for some purpose.”

My plans were formed.

. . . . .

At a conference of officers on February 19th a Ministerial Decree was read out to the effect that Rathanian prisoners from Hungary had been telling the Russians that they were Russians (poruski) in the same way that the Roumanians of Hungary claimed to be Roumanians. We were to inform the men that they were to call themselves Magyars, of Wallachian tongue.

So here we were, actually being forbidden to call ourselves Roumanians. In practice many of my Roumanian comrades ceased to use their own language before foreigners.

The Hungarian press would not even admit that the Austro-Hungarian Army—ever victorious, as they said—contained any “ nationalities.” Compelled to read this

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\* The Prince of Montenia (Wallachia), who, at one moment towards the close of the sixteenth century, succeeded in uniting under his sceptre the three Roumanian principalities of Montenia, Moldavia, and Transylvania.

press, we found our national feelings violated every day. Our Roumanian papers were given a pitiable rôle—to reproduce what appeared in the Hungarian journals. It was even remarkable if now and then they ventured a timid remonstrance, as, for instance, when it was said that the 31st Regiment from Sibiiu was composed of Szeklers and Saxons. Hungarian writers pushed insolent bravado to the length of declaring in public meetings that the whole of Europe could show only two sorts of soldier—the Hungarian and the German. [*Budapesti Hirlap*, February 23rd, 1915.]

But the companies were the scene of even more wounding and revolting things. Any soldier who approached his officer, whether presenting himself as a recruit or merely to make some request, had to speak entirely in Hungarian. Before the war it was sufficient for the men to know the usual Hungarian form of address: "Sir, I beg to inform you . . ." after which they could go on in Roumanian. But now in war they had to use Hungarian throughout. Those who could not manage to learn the necessary Hungarian phrases were tied to stakes for two hours in the depth of winter. I knew two men who were dead when they were taken down. I have seen officers beat Roumanians until blood came, because they could not speak Hungarian. One day a Hungarian officer stopped a private in Cismadia Street who was wearing the Transylvanian cockade in his cap. He pulled

off the man's cap, tore out the cockade, threw it down, stamped on it, and then cuffed the man himself.

At the barrack gates a crowd of women was assembled, many of them having come long distances to see their husbands, and they had plenty of opportunity of seeing what their menfolk had to put up with. They wept, hiding their faces in their white shawls—and cursed.

\* \* \* \*

My feelings, and those of all the other Roumanian officers, were indescribable. We had indeed only one thought—revenge. So I stayed in Sibiiu as long as I could, waiting for an opportunity of doing something useful. If we had arms, I think we should have refused to wait any longer for the entry of Roumania. The whole garrison would have revolted at the first signal. But arms had vanished from Sibiiu. There remained perhaps 500, and we were more than 10,000, not including convalescents.

If Roumania had moved, we should have taken up scythes and axes, as our fathers did in 1848, and you would have seen good work from weapons even such as those. But Easter came, *Resurrection* day, and still Roumania did not come. Our suspense turned to despair. The confidence of the peasantry was shaken, and they began to curse. All Ardéal was cursing by now.

The 31st Sibiiu Regiment was transferred to Brünn. The Roumanians of Hodved units were constantly sent back to the front. Hungarians from the Pusztas were brought up to the Roumanian frontier villages, and the 31st was replaced at Sibiiu by the 8th Infantry from Brünn, most of the men being Czechs.

\*           \*           \*           \*

It was no longer possible to stay in Ardéal. Mourning and sorrow stifled me, and I managed at length to obtain convalescent leave of five weeks for the Mehadia baths, in spite of the fact that on three occasions I had been called back to my unit to be posted to reinforcements.

I reached Mehadia in the first days of April, new style. There I brought together most of the notes which have gone to make up this book—while, incidentally, I tried to cure my rheumatism. During the four weeks which my cure lasted at the baths in the picturesque Cerna valley, I made a methodical study of the Roumanian frontier. I sought out the easiest and best exit. It was quite impossible to enter into conversation with the inhabitants of Pecinisca, a village in the vicinity of the Baths of Hercules. Not one of them dared mention Roumania. In this village there was a mountain battery, and at Mehadia a regiment of Pozsony (Pressburg) Honveds. They lived on meat procured by the contraband traffic in cattle from Roumania. Every day thirty to forty beasts arrived.

I was obliged to make my plans unaided. I sent my orderly, Murarescu, on leave to his own home at Scorei, a village near Făgăraș, and I made all my preparations, down to the last detail. I used to go out into the woods for revolver practice—this in case I ran into any frontier patrols. But my revolver did not give me enough confidence, so I bought a Mannlicher sporting rifle, which I found at a hairdresser's, and the good man gave me six cartridges as well.

\* \* \* \*

My leave expired on May 5th, new style. I had therefore to leave the baths on the 3rd. I did a good deal of card-playing these last few days. I could not think of anything else, and I was very nervous and uneasy. It was not fear of what I was about to do which tormented me, but acute distress at leaving my Ardéal.

On the night of April 30th I played cards until midnight. I then went home and walked about, in feverish anxiety, until 3 a.m. I put up in a little bag my manuscript, a pack of cards, and several small articles. I left in my room my sword, a change of linen and two books, to make my absence less suspicious. I had taken the precaution of showing the gun to several friends and telling them that I was going shooting on May 1st to test it. Thus it was known that I should be away that day. At 3 o'clock in the morning I dressed, put my knapsack over my shoulders, a cloak over that, a raincoat

on top, and slung my gun over my shoulder. The effect of all this was to make me three times natural size. I knelt down, facing the East, and crying like a child I said a *paternoster* and a last *God help me*. The ripples of the Cerna made a melancholy echo under my window—the forest murmured and called me.

I stifled my feelings, dried my tears, loaded my two weapons, and went out. The sleepy porter of the Heresieuhof Military Academy eyed me closely. I gave him the twenty centimes charge (for opening the door at night) without a word. Outside, the statue of Hercules seemed to be turning round to look at me. Only a faint moonlight shone clear and smiling on Mehadia. I went by the bathing establishment and slipped out into the woods without being seen. Once there, I did not care a straw for anyone.

I went straight up to the White Cross on a hill 500 metres above the little town. There day broke, the flowers shook the dew from the petals, and the birds twittered. I consulted my map, then made my way to the source of the Dornogled, where I took some food and had a drink. Up to this point I knew my way. After half an hour's rest, map in hand, I climbed towards the top of Sulita ("The Lance"). I walked on, without seeing a soul, until near to the frontier, where a plain begins. Here I met a wolf but 600 yards away. I went for him, but he was soon out of sight. A kid was grazing

on a hill. I crept up and shot it. I had no ill-will against the poor beast, but I wanted to know if there was a patrol about; for, if so, I knew the sound of firing would certainly bring it up. I waited and watched behind a tree for half an hour. Nothing happened.

I started off again, but the track soon disappeared. In a valley I heard the sound of running water, and, feeling thirsty, I clambered down some rocky ground to where it came from. A stream issued from some melting snow. I brought out my provisions, for it was already 10 o'clock.

I followed up this stream and reached some steep cliffs, where I was up to my waist in snow. I don't know how I got out of it. I summoned up all my strength, all my mountain child's energy, clambered over scattered tree-trunks, crawled on all fours up slippery places, dragged myself over great blocks of stone, stumbling at every step. With my eyes fixed on the wooded summit, I pressed on. After four hours I reached the top, breathless and tortured with fatigue. My heart was beating as if about to burst within me. Here on the summit lay the frontier beneath the snow.

I took a rest, spending a whole hour in gazing at Ardéal, now to be left behind me. When I reminded myself that I was leaving it, perhaps *for ever*, my mind was a prey to keen grief. I must indeed have suffered, to have

resolved to *desert* with the Emperor's medal on my breast, and to leave my beloved Ardéal behind me.

In tears I followed the frontier for about a kilometre until I saw a village and discovered a path. I stopped perpetually and turned to gaze at that poor Roumanian territory which has indeed suffered the chastisement of God. . . . At the village of Podeni I gave myself up to the Roumanian frontier-guards and was conducted, via Turncu-Severin, to Bucharest.

Here I am on Roumanian soil, but ever in thought and spirit I dwell in Ardéal, and I wait—wait confidently to hear the great summons which will carry me, dead or alive, to my home in Greater Roumania !

THE END.





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